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Interior Awards issue

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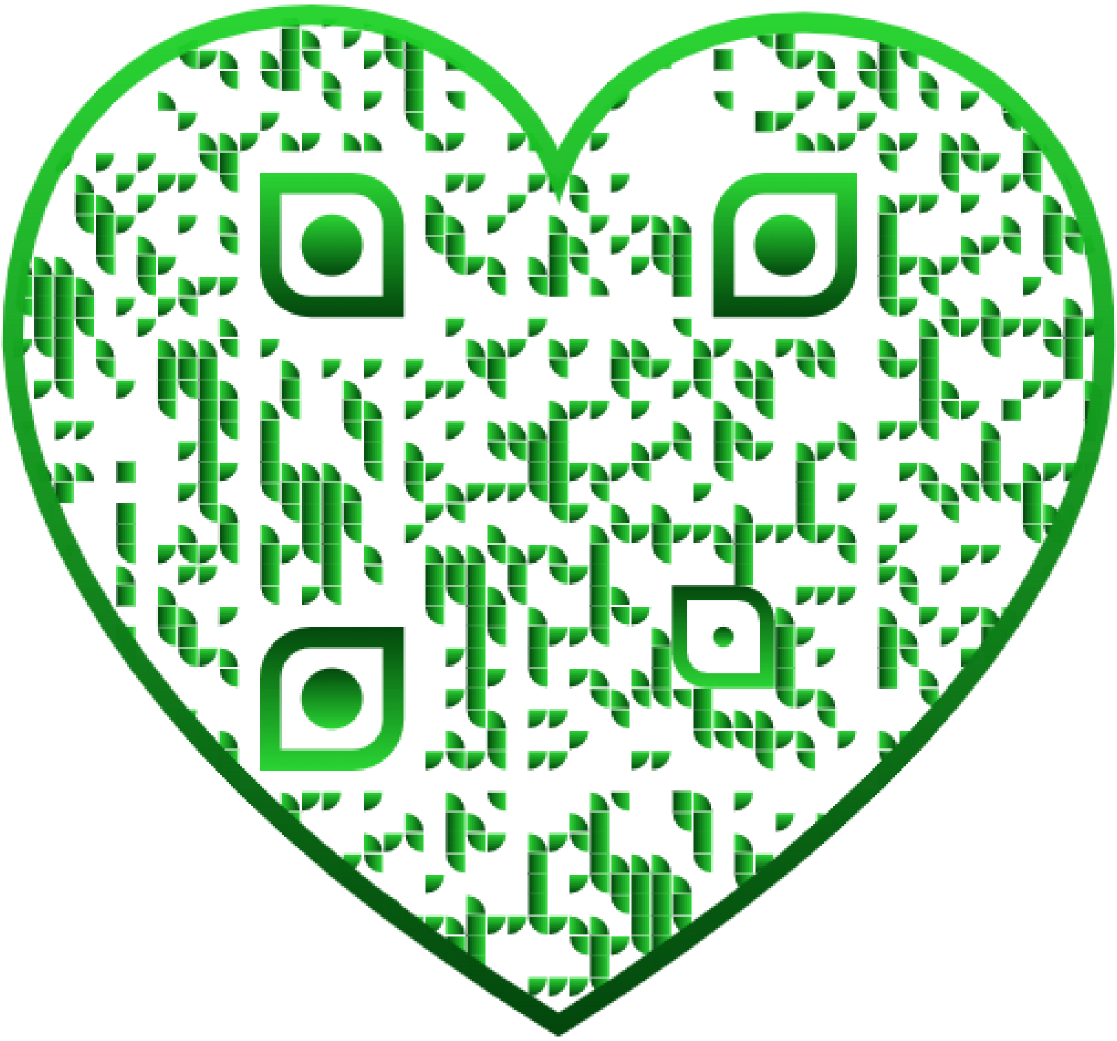

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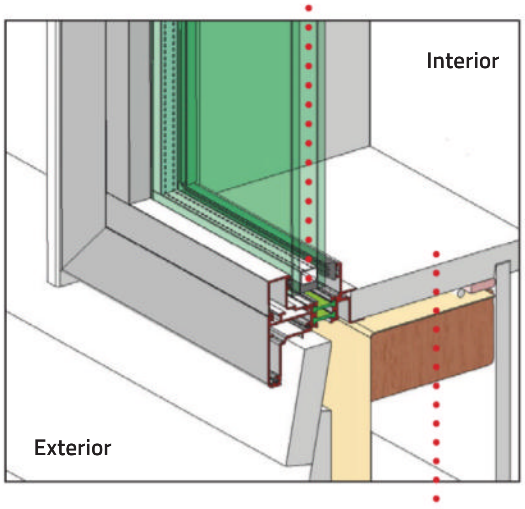

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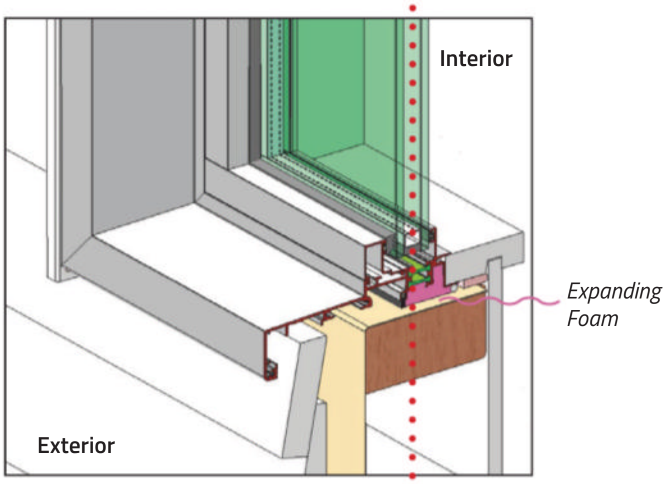

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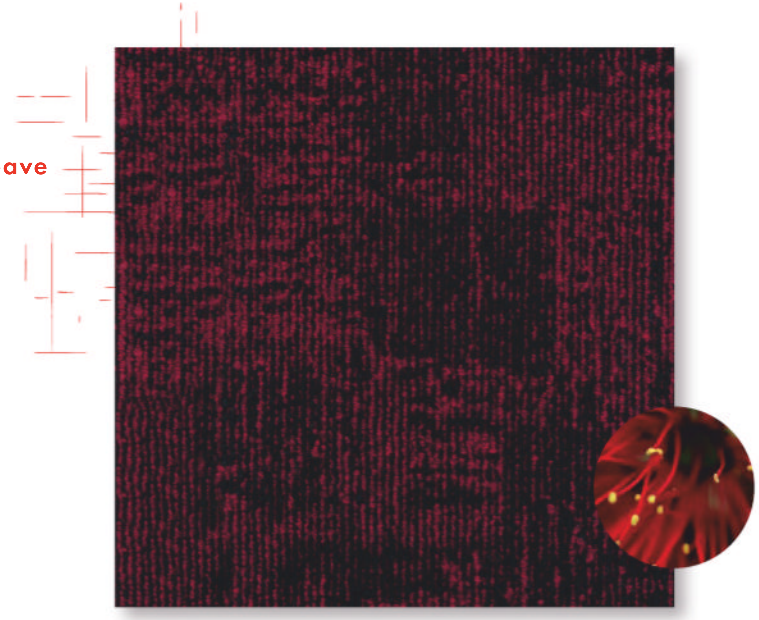
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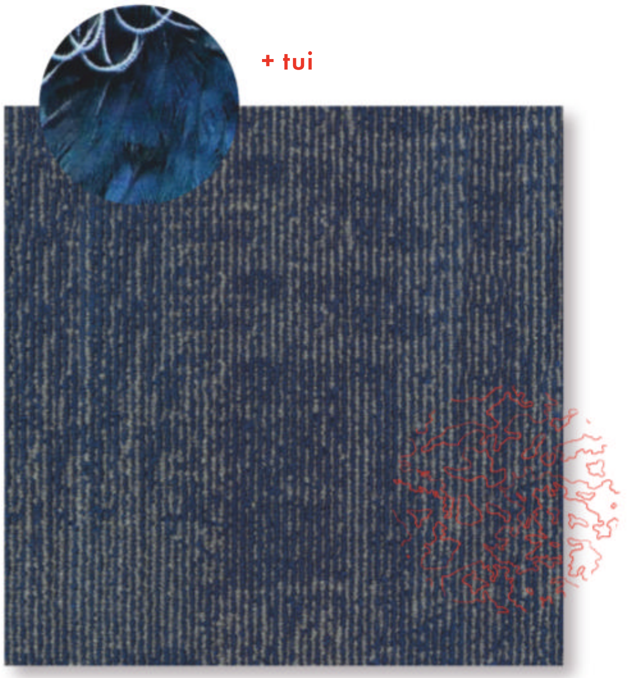

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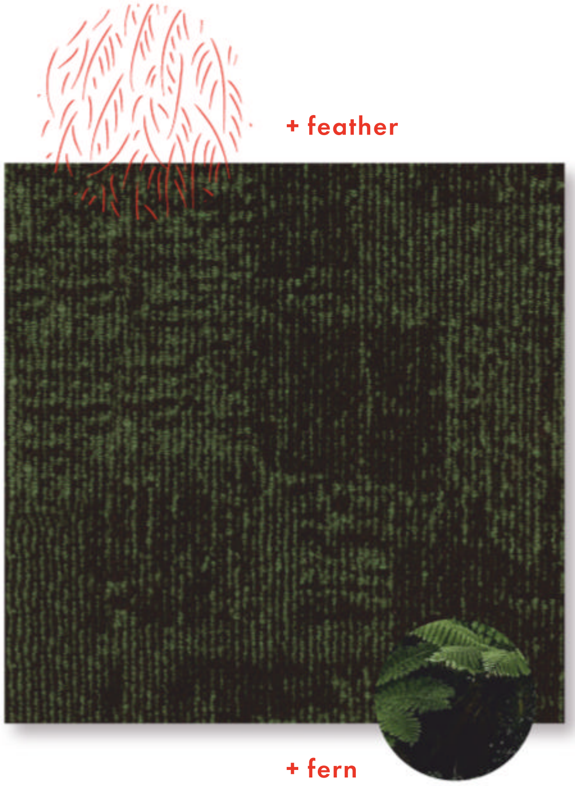

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Chris Barton

Image: David St George.

IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT, GET out of, not just the kitchen, but the house. In June, *The New Zealand Herald* reported how a tenant did just that – managing to break their year-long lease just a month after moving in, following a complaint to the Tenancy Tribunal about excessive heat in their sixth-floor one-bedroom apartment. The Tribunal heard evidence of a day in March this year when the temperature inside the east-facing unit reached a dangerously hot 43.6°C before midday. The next day, it reached 38.5°C before 9am, even with the living room window open and after the air conditioning had been running. The tenant claimed the windows in the apartment did not open wide enough to allow sufficient draught. The landlord suggested the tenants "had not been using them properly" and produced a Healthy Homes Standards report showing compliance with the applicable ventilation requirements. The landlord's temperature readings in the living room with the curtains closed and then open showed lower, but still uncomfortably high, afternoon temperatures of 26.4°C and 28.3°C respectively. The Tribunal ordered the $2440 bond be returned to the tenant, plus partial reimbursement of extra electricity charges to run air conditioning. Following the Tribunal's ruling, an agreement was reached between the tenant and landlord to end the lease earlier than the contracted date. A new tenancy began on 11 April. One hopes it came with a health warning.

That the Tribunal is receiving complaints like this shouldn't come as a surprise. The writing has been on the outside walls and windows of our houses for some time. A 2018 Stats NZ survey of 6700 homes found 36 per cent were sitting at 25°C or higher over summer, sometimes above 30°C (the comfortable range being 20°C to 25°C).

More recently, there was the 2024 Auckland Council technical report, *Life in Medium Density Housing in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland*, which surveyed 1337 medium-density housing (MDH) residents about their living conditions, focusing on code of compliance homes built between 2016 and 2023. It found the upper levels of terraced houses and duplexes were too hot in summer. Participants were dissatisfied with the hot temperatures as they caused uncomfortable sleeping and could lead to heat-related health implications. Participants also reported making changes to cool their homes, such as keeping curtains closed, windows open, purchasing free-standing fans and air-conditioning units, or installing ceiling fans, heat pumps and air-conditioning units.

The findings were similar to those of a 2007 study by the Building Research Association (BRANZ) of 400 homes; it found that newer buildings were going above the comfortable temperature of 25°C and warned that climate change was only going to make this problem worse.

What to do? When the Auckland MDH research was released, Minister for Building and Construction Chris Penk displayed breathtaking ignorance when he announced that concerns about new homes overheating were a key reason he had asked officials to investigate the new (2023) H1 Energy Efficiency (insulation) settings. He wanted to see, he told *The Herald*, "if the recent changes are workable and not contributing to unintended consequences like overheating or unreasonable additional costs". Penk copped considerable flak for his comments – "unbelievably shortsighted", "another step

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Interior Awards Issue

ON THE COVER
This year's Interior Awards Supreme and Residential Award winner is Palimpsest House by Monk Mackenzie. Image: Dawid Wisniewski.

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backwards", "misguided". Many, including BRANZ and the Green Building Council, pointed out that poor design – insufficient ventilation, a lack of shading or too much glass to the north – not insulation, is the problem.

As Green Building Council business development manager Matthew Cutler-Welsh explained, the real issue is that "our woeful Building Code doesn't consider overheating at all". Again, this isn't new. As BRANZ points out, researchers have been saying for nearly 25 years that our Building Code needs to include standards for cooling homes. It's worth noting that the recently introduced Healthy Homes Standards, while requiring aspects of ventilation, also don't explicitly address overheating.

By May, Penk had changed his view: "It seems to me that the ventilation part of the Building Code needs an update and obviously the insulation, or rather the energy efficiency element, has been addressed in the sense of the H1 rules," he told *Radio NZ*. "It seems to me that with all the expertise that's available, this is something that New Zealand Inc. could have contemplated and considered and actively avoided," he said. "We've got to see a regime where people aren't being cooked alive in their own house."

Indeed, we do. Just ask the Brits. In August last year, it was reported that some 4.5 million Britons have been so hot in their homes during periods of hot weather that it has made them unwell. The condition, dubbed the 'hot house syndrome', is a result of inadequate insulation in old building stock, poor ventilation and other factors that contribute to overheating.

What's particularly worrying about New Zealand's situation is that we are still designing large numbers of MDH new builds to overheat. To really solve this problem in the wider context of increasing temperatures caused by climate change will need more than fiddling with ventilation requirements in the Building Code. We need a design-led Code that looks at the whole building – windows, walls, shading, insulation, etc. and how it performs – not in relation just to overheating but, also, to lowering carbon emissions. If we don't, well…, we're cooked.

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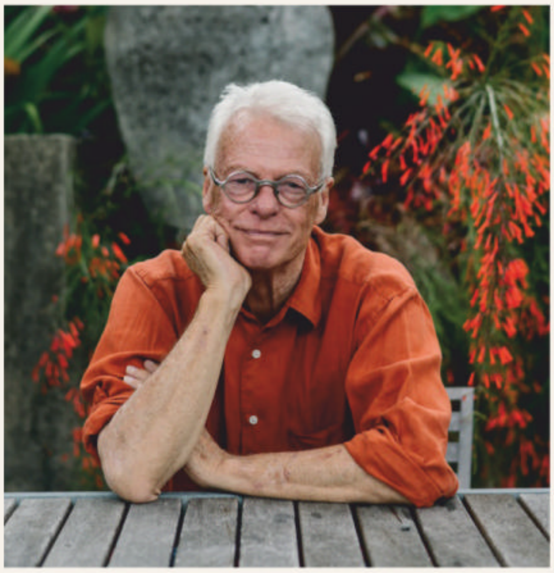
Between behemoth and bijoux

Pip Cheshire



ABOVE Pip Cheshire. Photo: David St George.

WE STOOD ON THE ROAD, BACK some 50 metres and silent in the still, warm air as the pub burned; a quiet conflagration that defied the few hoses the volunteer brigade could bring to bear. The silence was as if we were at a wake, each of us bound up in our memories of days and nights in that big lounge bar, the one with the wall-sized photo of the Māori All Blacks and the three Going brothers in full flight – local heroes from just up the road. We reminisced in subdued voices, sharing stories of Hello Sailor and The Exponents in the big tent out the back and buying underpriced red wine from the little hatch that served as the bottle store, the staff more familiar with the correct pricing of Lion Red than the few dusty gems on the shelves behind them.

And so it went. The roof rafters collapsed in a spray of sparks and our talk turned to other fires to which we had each borne witness: the pre-dawn loss of the Akaroa fish and chip shop, the Victoria Park grandstand and the explosive loss of houses on a parched-dry Redcliffs knoll, a day so hot the Wigram fire engine got stuck in the melting road tar of Canal Reserve.

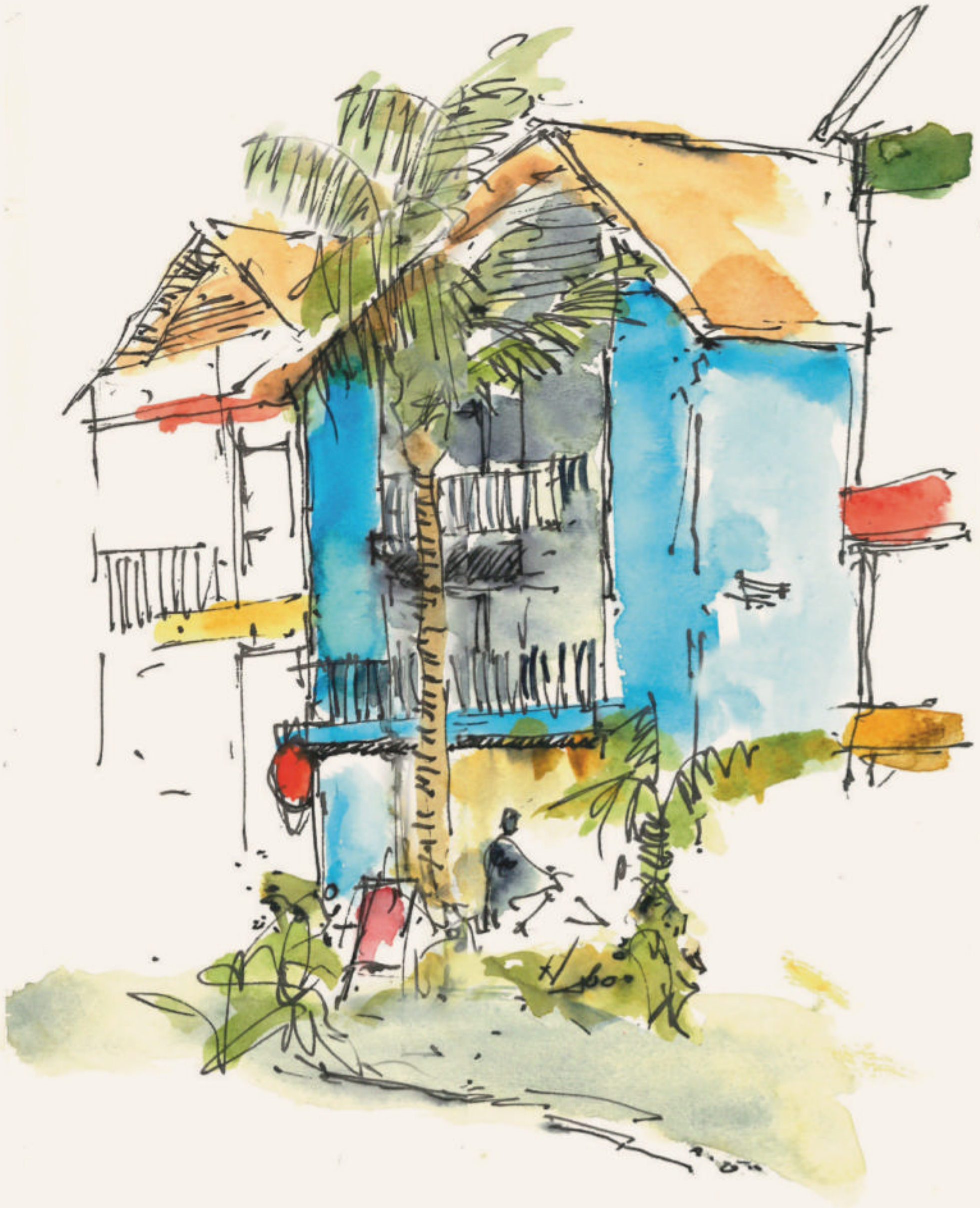
Driving back over the hill, we discussed what might happen with the new tabula rasa at the water's edge, a site having a long association with American novelist and deep-sea fisherman Zane Grey. With his characteristic mix of bravado and vision, Leigh proposed buying the still-smouldering ruins and rebuilding, citing the bay's attraction as a gateway to the offshore island reserve with its burgeoning dive tourism. For all our holiday enthusiasm, we ran out of steam when we returned to the city, the complexity of the ash pile's ownership and insurance becoming more apparent, and the appeal of a somewhat remote development by three neophyte would-be developers fading.

Visiting the bay now one experiences all the uncertainty of our building on the water's edge, and the lost opportunities that result. The natural curve of a sandy bay, memorably ringed with a picket of swordfish bills in one of the pub's photos from the halcyon Zane Grey days before catch and release, has been lost to the infrastructure of mooring, storing, launching and retrieving boats.

The bay is dominated by a rather large and ungainly phoenix on the old hotel site, awkwardly adrift between the flat land stretching inland up the valley and the uninviting rock-retained water's edge a hundred metres away. It is a big presence in the arc of the bay: four storeys high, 130 metres long of multicoloured and gabled bays, a retail strip at ground level on the seaward side, and a small supermarket, gas station and hotel entry in the rear. Apparently, the local council refused consent for the behemoth, thinking it too big, but revised its view under duress from the local community who saw it offering jobs and tourist infrastructure for the growing numbers of fishing, sailing and diving visitors.

The building offends many for whom buildings matter, thought too chaotically coloured, too-crude an assemblage of foreign and disparate forms, and just too damn big. And it is all of those things, and in doing so sits well outside the expected outcome of the RMA-based consent system. Perhaps its existence is affirmation of the power of community approval, or has the provision of the retail 'active edge' at ground level played into the planners' inevitable expectations? Perhaps the bars of intense colour used in a plucky attempt to break up the massive form have been overlooked. We are so used to arguing the toss over what shade of olive drab or dull brown best renders one's building a shapeless blob amid the local flora that this thing is a shocking presence, as if one of the more flamboyant denizens of K' Road were strutting their stuff in Remuera village.

Frankly, I like its chutzpah. I like the way it creates a massive built presence that holds the space of the bay from oozing up the valley behind, and I enjoy the strip of retail promenade that has just enough length to accommodate a mix of shops. It's not a great building, though; the precast construction all but defies an inviting fitout and a sort of low-maintenance, hoseable aesthetic prevails. The lack of contact with either the bay hinterland, the road in front or the distant water edge is



ABOVE I can't help thinking the council planners were so suckered by the active edge at street level, they set aside the light reflection index. Pip Cheshire, 2025.

its real shortcoming, betraying the uncomfortable spatial relationships that result from an accretion of discrete decisions by councils and landowners, both constrained by district plan and land title.

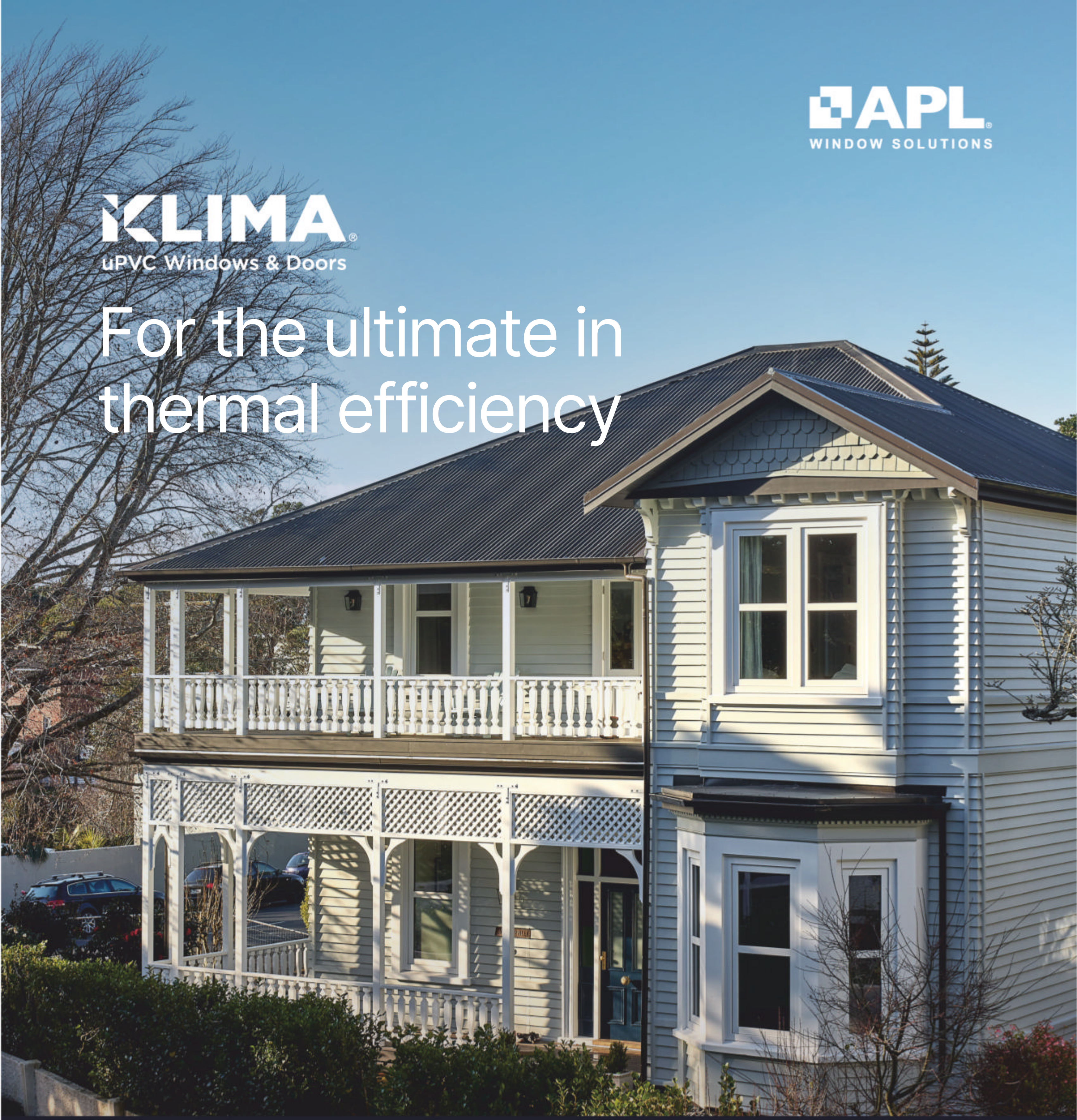
What might have been a great hotel, curving around the bay with a narrow promenade full of diners and drinkers overlooking the water is lost. The hapless hotel guest in search of the ocean has an ugly traverse through an ungracious roadside strip with desultory exotic palms and a few attempts to balance shelter from the sea breeze while maintaining an outlook to, well, a road, a car park, a hundred metres of grass and the clattering masts of the marina beyond. The scale of the lawn is enormous, suggesting some 'horse trading' at the time of the marina's consent: 10,000 square metres of turf for a beach.

Though I am not a boatie, I accept that there are probably enough swimming places along the ribbon of pōhutukawa-clad headlands and sandy coves up the road for the beach in the old hotel photographs to be sacrificed, but might a more inspired council and landowner have connived to manipulate title and district plan to make a space determined more by the delight of occupying the water line with a wine or coffee and the smell of salt in the air, than the dull inevitability of esplanade reserves, road setbacks and the immutability of legal title?

If the big bruiser in the middle of the bay is a lost opportunity, a couple of hundred yards or so to the east, a café sits nestled into a fold in the hill where the road curves to the south. It has only the road between wine glass and water, albeit water occupied by the to and fro of loading dive boats with gas bottles and neoprene-clad passengers. The building is an eclectic assembly of recycled timber posts and beams, crude stonework, thatched roofs and walls, and plastic blinds. If that all sounds a bit rough and tumble, it is proof that the sum of a building may, under inspired direction, transcend a listing of its components.

I am pretty sure that then local artist Tom Burnett designed and built this place, drawing on his disdain for the strictures of city hall. His intuitive sense of the way in which the romance of a castaway experience might be conjured up if the constraints of a too prescriptive bureaucratic apparatus are challenged is evident in every one of its unlikely junctions. The joint does a good trade. No doubt, fresh fish, a good wine list and a decent cup of coffee are critical but, so too, is that happy conjunction of hill slope, proximity to the water's edge and that wonderful confection of materials that seem pulled together from the detritus of the high-water line.

Between the behemoth in the middle and the bijoux at the edge are two ways of building in the bay. Neither is perfect but each offers a comment on our way of building in sensitive landscapes. The former is an enormous form that needed, but failed to get, the cooperation of city hall to organise the bay's public and private spaces and create that rare thing in Aotearoa, the intensely occupied water's edge. In contrast, that little café in the corner of the bay shows us the delight possible when city hall keeps its head down.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Reading the raupō

Karamia Müller

ABOVE Karamia Müller. Photo: David St George.

READER, I'VE BEEN THINKING a lot about raupō houses lately. Specifically, hybrid architecture – the kind that used raupō as both structure and signal. So, yes… raupō houses, I guess.

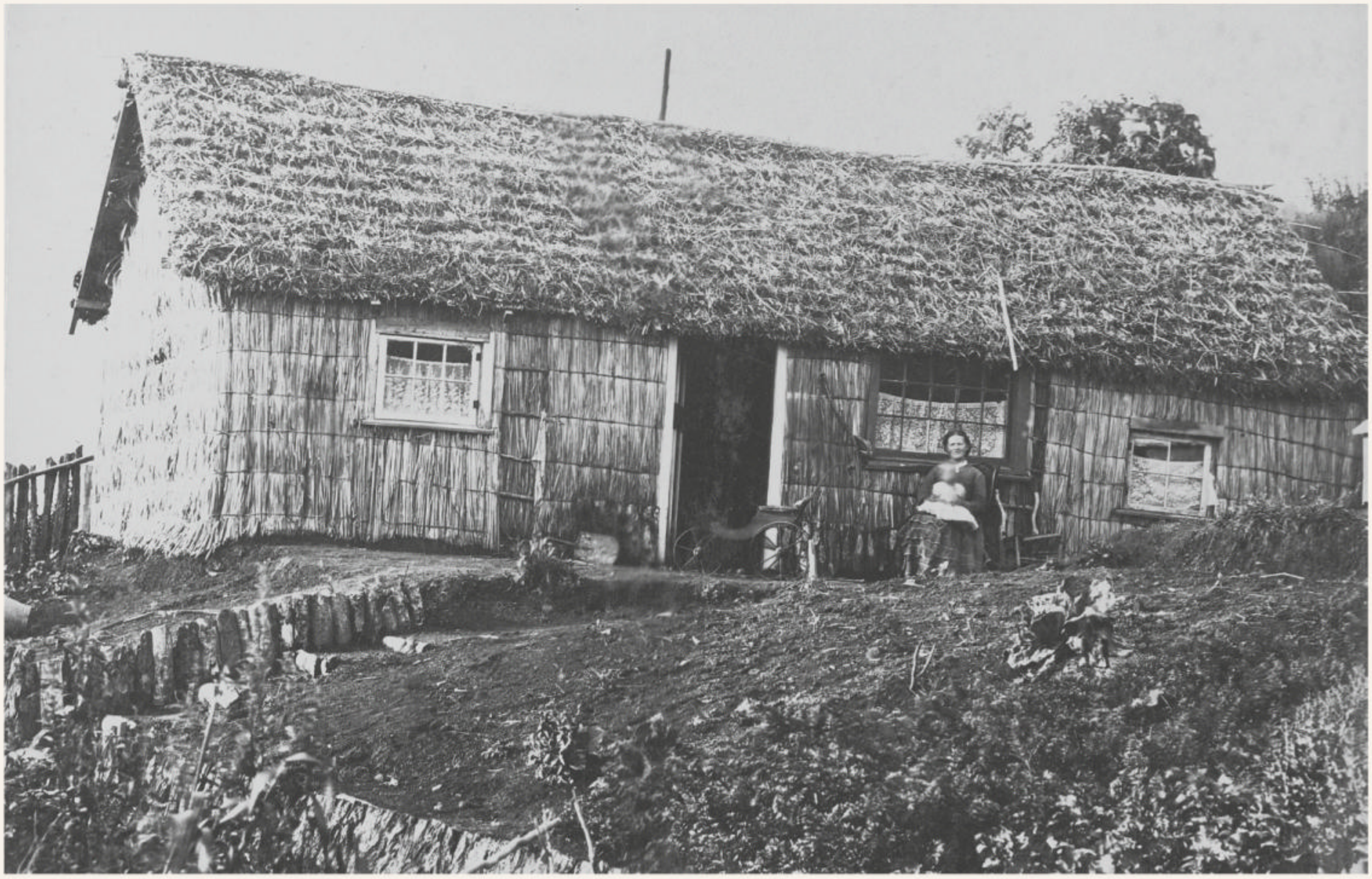
Not in a nostalgic or artefact-of-the-past sense. More in that way your brain just starts, initially and gently, to sort-of obsess when you really pause to think – and, then, the noticing becomes a loop and it is full-blown Googling at 2am. I saw an image online recently: a black-and-white photograph, the architecture oblique, walls bundled with dried raupō, a gabled roof, a structure holding memory in its fibres – and I couldn't stop… thinking. It's a way of thinking that feels rare in a century defined by the internet's churn. Hybrid buildings are just so completely of place that they feel both compelling and unsettling, like grief in a way – as most architecture that stays with you does.

This recent spiral began with Bhaveeka Madagammana, a doctoral researcher whose fascinating work reframes the way we read the land beneath our feet. You may have seen his recent article – and, if not, I recommend it: "Auckland was once a food garden managed by Māori – that knowledge could shape the future." His framing landed with me (I should declare a conflict of interest here: I'm his supervisor). Yes, there are research links but, more than that, it felt like the future being opened, not closed. This is especially the case when so much of urban development feels like a race to exhaust the earth's remaining materials under the guise of human progress – a progress that seems to leave little for what comes next.

If food gardens – conceived through a lens that respects Māori sovereignty – offer one kind of urban starting point, then surely material histories – even those long dismantled – can too. Raupō architecture, long erased, might not be relics, but rather forks in the road. Not artefacts, but provocations.

Architecture remembers laws that we have made but forget, and raupō houses weren't just homes, they were outlawed out of existence and the urban consciousness. In 1842, the colonial government introduced an ordinance that taxed raupō houses out of existence. The official justification was fire risk. But, an argument can be made that it was more about appearances. Settler New Zealand needed to present itself as modern, stable, permanent: progressive. And raupō – signifying Māori construction, land-use and presence – stood in the way of that image. And so, raupō was removed – from towns, from memory, from architectural legitimacy. That moment mattered. And, while it has passed, we may recall it anew today. Because it wasn't just a material being taxed. It was a world view being legislated against. The ordinance reflected a colonial logic of separation; buildings had to be fireproof, permanent and European – just as cities had to be ordered, zoned and emptied of Indigenous authority. And so, here I am, banging away at this machine, wondering aloud: what does it mean that our urban imagination rarely includes the materials that return to earth? What might it look like to build, not for permanence but for memory, for transformation? If we indulge the proposal that architecture isn't neutral – that it shapes who is protected and who is displaced, that it reflects whose stories are embedded into the walls and whose are pushed to the margins – then, we must also recognise its role in constructing the edge condition. Architecture as an edge condition conceptualises that those buildings, like laws, draw lines. Delineate, if you will. Between inside and out. Public and private. Us and them. We see it in zoning maps. In planning codes. In the way 'heritage' is preserved – whose histories are locked in place and protected, and whose are left undocumented and left to decompose. We even see it in the ways in which risk is defined. 'Natural hazards' often overlap with areas already socially neglected. Flood zones, erosion-prone zones, managed retreat zones – these are also the places to where people have been pushed out, again and again.

And, as severe weather increases – because of the way we've chewed



ABOVE

View of a mother and infant sitting outside a raupō house in Taranaki, photographed 1875–1885, by William Andrews Collis of New Plymouth. A baby's phaeton may be seen in the doorway.

Raupō whare, Taranaki. Parihaka album 1. Ref: PA1-q-183-25-2. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

through resources – well… reader, 'natural' hazards don't feel so natural after all. The banning of raupō, I believe, was one such edge decision. It helped define who was on the inside of the colony's future – and who had to remain outside it. But, here, I would like to consider that the edge is the most powerful place from which to design. Bhaveeka's research, grounded in mātauranga Māori and food systems, poses a deceptively simple provocation: what if cities began with kai? What if urban design began with the knowledge of whenua, of seasonal cycles, of whakapapa? For this late-night Googler, it's a welcome flip in thinking. It invites a material logic shaped by decay and renewal, rather than by durability and denial. In that light, raupō doesn't look like a primitive option. It looks like part of a coherent ecological strategy – one that sees time not as linear, but as cyclical. One that knows materials will return, as they must, to the whenua. Imagine: skyscrapers designed to decompose; memorials built from materials that require human touch to maintain them; and walls that can be dismantled without harming the land beneath. In that world, sustainability stops being cynical. It becomes a kind of life force. Polynesian culture embeds ceremony in material work. It's tactile. It slows you down. You harvest by hand. You bind with harakeke. You weave with intention. You don't just build a wall – you enter into relationship with it. Compare and contrast that to the ways in which buildings go up today: standardised, sometimes prefabricated, often trucked in, typically bolted on. Subcontracted labour. Imported waste.

Disconnection from place is thus baked into the very blueprint of the built realm. But materials like raupō invite something else: intimacy, acountability. You have to care for it or it falls apart. You build with the expectation of maintenance, not avoidance. And, in that, there's a quiet lesson – every structure is temporary. Every structure is relational. I would happily take on any critic who dismisses this as romanticism. It's not a call to upscale swamp reeds. It's not a TED talk about sustainability. I suppose what I am saying is that, if what we build reflects what we value, then what we've outlawed tells us just as much. The raupō ban wasn't about fire only. It was about refusing a world view – one grounded in Indigenous sovereignty, seasonal logic and ecological time. And, perhaps, as we begin to confront the limits of how we build – and how we imagine building – it's time to revisit that refusal. Because it's at the edge – of cities, of disciplines, of remembered histories – where something new might actually take root.

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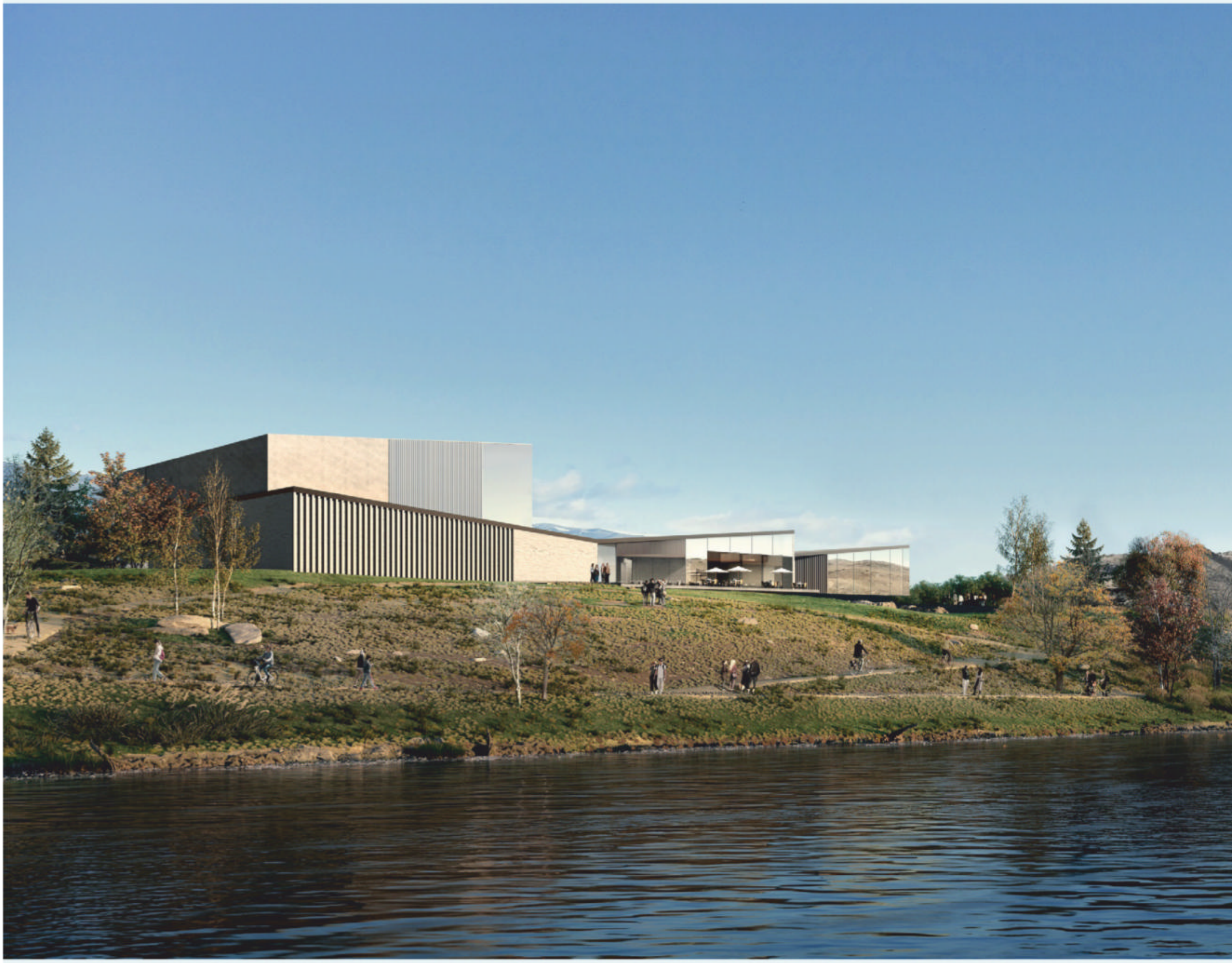

CELEBRATING CROMWELL'S RICH HISTORY

Jasmax's 3000m^2 Cromwell Memorial Hall, Museum and Events Centre, overlooking Lake Dunstan and the Kawarau River in Central Otago, is 13 months into construction and due for completion in May 2026.

A replacement for the Central Otago District Council's aging 60-year-old hall on the same site, the centre will feature a 400-seat auditorium space alongside a new museum, a 40-seat cinema, a café, and retail, community and event spaces. A memorial commemorating the fallen from last century's two world wars will be retained and relocated to the new building's entry within a new Memorial Garden.

Jasmax lead architect Chris Jack says the design team has worked in collaboration with local practice SA Studio on the project, to ensure the spaces accommodate the wide variety of community requirements. "Design principles of connectivity, flexibility and adaptability will support the longevity of the centre as a vital cultural heart, ensuring it remains a valued asset that will meet the community's needs for years to come."

Jack says the architects have worked in partnership with Kāi Tahu consultancy Aukaha to ensure the design reflects the identity, history, values and narratives of mana whenua.

"The building is designed for resilience, with low-damage seismic design to key elements," says Jack. "Rainwater will be collected and reused in the surrounding gardens and a warm roof will maintain comfort year-round and also help reduce environmental noise in the main performance areas."

Render: Supplied.

Materials from the old hall have been salvaged and reused in the new building, with some gifted to local community groups.

Built by local returned servicemen and the wider community, the previous hall served as inspiration to maximise ‘local’ in the new construction, says Jack. “Through procurement and construction, led by Naylor Love, maximising local subcontractor involvement and sourcing materials nearby has been a core focus.” This commitment is evident in the pre-cast panels, made and delivered from less than 3km away, and the brick cladding sourced from Alexandra, utilising repurposed aggregate from local goldmine tailings and the Clyde Dam.

UK GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT TO VISIT AOTEAROA

The inaugural recipient of the Hood Fellowship, established in honour of former University of Auckland Vice-Chancellor Sir John Hood to enable overseas academics to challenge and inspire research at the University of Auckland, is the UK government’s chief architect Sarah Allan.

As the Head of Architecture and Urban Design within the Chief Planner’s Directorate of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Allan advises on design policies and practices, both locally and nationally, and delivers residential and cultural projects at a range of scales, from master plans to individual homes and art projects.

In her two public lectures – Auckland on 17 September and Dunedin on 24 September – Allan will tease out the relations between architecture and government to give our industry a better understanding of the potential value of a government architect here in this country.

Image: Supplied.

ABOVE Sarah Allan will visit Aotearoa in September to speak at both Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland and Otago Polytechnic’s School of Architecture.

CONSTRUCTION LEAGUE PANEL AT BUILDNZ 2025

Hear from the decision-makers behind the nation’s major building projects and gain exclusive insights into the direction of the construction industry. Craig Treloar (Hawkins), Warren Luxton (NZ Construction Alliance), Malcolm Fleming (NZ Certified Builders), Greg Durkin (BCITO), Andy Rampton (Procore) and Ben Hurrell (Hubexo) will speak on Tuesday 15 July, 1.00pm to 2.00pm, at the Auckland Showgrounds. **buildnz.com/show/2025/**

WORKING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Terry Cheng attended **DigiComm25** and came away cautiously optimistic about the role of emerging technologies in enabling more-meaningful work.

NZ INSTITUTE OF BUILDING CONFERENCE 2025
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DigiComm25
Growing our global digital community
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Image: Supplied by NZIOB.

ABOVE Clara Sumner, National Sales Manager at Winstone Wallboards (GIB), addresses the audience at DigiComm25.

DigiComm25, hosted by the New Zealand Institute of Building in March, was a challenge to the status quo.

The conference acknowledged that building in Aotearoa New Zealand was no longer naïve but part of the international debate. In the imagination of the social consciousness, things offshore were so far away for island nations because of scale, economy and population size. Today, being far, far away isn't so isolating. Architects can essentially draw the same-looking drawings from the same software packages, regardless of where they live in the world.[1]

The speakers spoke of the promise of BIM – how it helps with clear design communication and, therefore, better-coordinated buildings because digital twins represent a single source of truth. They explained that it all boiled down to better design outcomes, whatever that entailed in the imagination of architecture.

Where capital is God, US-based Nate Helbach of Neutral showed their work on multistorey housing with mass timber, and rigorous sustainability certification, delivered by prefabrication and BIM. In Aotearoa, there were questions concerning the financial viability of BIM for small-scale projects. In rebuttal, others hoped that, as towns and cities mature, so, too, would the uptake of appropriate tools that pay off in the long term. After all, the rigour of the digital model is increasingly relevant in a world where New Zealand architecture is looking offshore to benchmark its design quality.

Amongst round-table discussions, many wondered how artificial intelligence would affect creative agency, quality assurance and intellectual property. Would architecture become one homogenous blob of probabilities – a statistically monotonous greyness supercharged by an algorithm that squeezes out any last humane quality in pursuit of a slick efficiency?

Shaolei Ren from the University of California showed the sobering story of the environmental cost of AI, particularly its carbon emissions and water consumption by data centres. Ren's findings called for an awareness of moderated AI usage, sharpened by the climate crisis and the Paris Agreement.

Justin Flitter of AI New Zealand took to the stage to advocate for large language models in ways that empower people to do more-meaningful work and remain competitive in an increasingly automated field. Stirring possibilities were laid out to those who could only imagine what AI could do in their lifetimes.

LEFT Professor Jennifer Whyte, Director of the John Grill Institute for Project Leadership at The University of Sydney, gave the opening keynote speech.

As described in *The Social Dilemma* from the Center for Humane Technology, one had to look only at social media and the loss of control in the debate over fake news and misinformation.[2] In an age of AI-driven algorithms, what room is left for the interest of the imaginative individual? Who has access to your data? And why do they want your data?

If, indeed, 'naïve' notions of New Zealand architecture are morally compromised, then an international outlook could help serve to address the issues of today. Steeped in tradition, however, the local condition is still concerned about the pragmatics: a residual attitude born out of necessity. The 'snakes' and 'snakeskins' that Mark Wigley alluded to in his 1986 essay[3] are possibly the strands of submarine fibre optic cables in the South Pacific that connect island nations to the rest of the world.

In a moral panic, DigiComm25 left one cautiously optimistic, if not hopeful, about the future of the elegant shed. A climate crisis is up against big technological changes for better or worse. The future is hard to tell.

Amid rich discourse, perhaps the event organisers had the foresight to tap into the wisdom of the mātātahi young professionals workshop. Here's what our digital natives had to say: We value the wisdom of a multigenerational industry. We want to do good for the world.[4]

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[1] Sean Godsell, 2019, *Sean Godsell: Houses*. UK: Thames & Hudson, p. 7.

[2] Jeff Orlowski, 2020, *The Social Dilemma*. US: Netflix.

[3] Mark Wigley, 1986, *Paradise Lost and Found*, in Douglas Lloyd Jenkins (ed.), 2005, *New Dreamland: Writing New Zealand Architecture*. Auckland: Godwit, p. 283.

[4] New Zealand Institute of Building, 2025, *DigiComm25*.

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BENJAMIN WOOLFIELD MOUNTFORT

1825–1898: A bicentennial tribute

01

When St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Parnell was consecrated on 25 August 1898, it was described as "second to no building of the kind in the colony, and in point of design, completeness and beauty reaches a high level mark not yet approached in the diocese". This was a tribute that came too late for the architect, Benjamin Mountfort, who had died earlier that year on 15 March, just two days after his 73rd birthday. St Mary's was his last, and certainly his largest, timber church and, arguably, one of the finest timber Gothic churches in the world. Within New Zealand, it is larger and more unified in design than Frederick Thatcher's Old St Paul's in Wellington and more organically conceived as a timber structure than is William Fitzjohn Crisp's St Michael and All Angels in Christchurch. Neither Richard Upjohn's timber churches in the United States nor Edward Medley's in New Brunswick, Canada, are its equal. St Mary's is, in fact, the culmination of more than 50 years of ecclesiologically inspired timber church building in New Zealand, one of this country's outstanding contributions to world architecture.

Benjamin Mountfort was born in England, 200 years ago on 13 March 1825. He grew up in Birmingham, where, as a teenager, he witnessed the construction of Sir Charles Barry's and Augustus Welby Pugin's Edward VI Grammar School on the opposite side of the street from where he lived. Barry and Pugin's collaboration was, effectively, a dress rehearsal for their later and better-known partnership on the Palace of Westminster in London, the first great building project of the Victorian period. Mountfort absorbed Pugin's writings from an early age; his personal copy of Pugin's *True Principles* is inscribed with the date 1841, the year of its publication. He trained with the leading Gothic Revival architect Richard Cromwell Carpenter and, in all probability, Carpenter's church designs for British colonies inspired Mountfort to emigrate to the Canterbury Association's New Zealand settlement in 1850. He arrived in Lyttelton on 16 December 1850 and, apart from a return trip to England in 1883, he remained in Canterbury for the rest of his life.

Mountfort was exceptional among colonial architects for his consistent application to his profession; apart from his first few years in Christchurch, when he ran a bookshop, took photographic portraits and taught drawing at Christ's College, he never undertook work outside his profession. The commission to design the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings in 1855, although not commenced until 1858, ensured a range of work from the Provincial Government and culminated in the addition of the Stone Council Chamber and Refreshment Rooms in 1865. The architecturally inventive and richly polychromed Council Chamber has received international recognition as an outstanding Victorian Gothic interior; its destruction during the Christchurch earthquakes was a catastrophic loss to our architectural heritage.

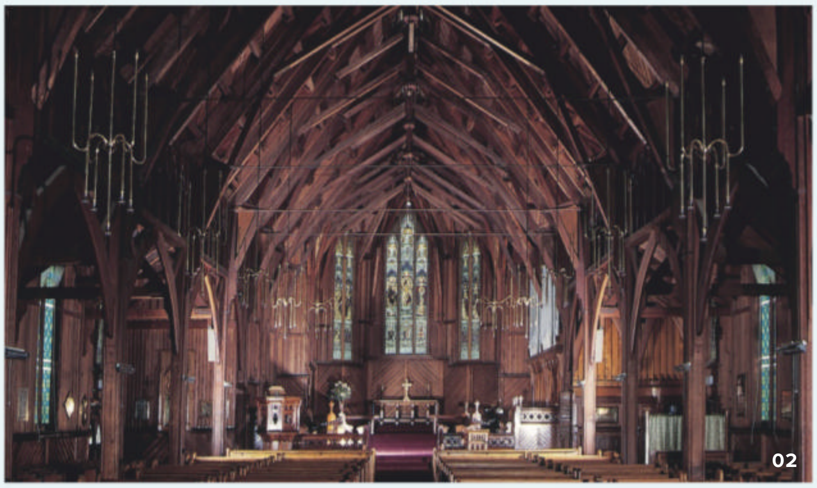
Mountfort's career as a church architect began inauspiciously. Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, begun in 1852, was an ambitious timber-framed church with brick infill: a medieval system of construction that must have seemed appropriate to the primitive state of the new colony. However, Mountfort hadn't counted on New Zealand timbers behaving in different ways from that of the green oak used in Britain for this type of construction; the framing twisted and warped, rendering the building unsafe. It was eventually dismantled and the timber reused elsewhere. In spite of this setback, Mountfort designed, from 1855 onwards, numerous timber churches for Anglican parishes throughout Christchurch and Canterbury,

01 B.W. Mountfort portrait by A.C. Barker. Canterbury Museum collection.

02 St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Parnell, Auckland, 1886–1898. Photo: Art History and Theory Visual Resources Collection, University of Canterbury.

03 Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings. Interior of Stone Chamber, 1865. Photo: Duncan Shaw-Brown.

04 St Peter's Anglican Church, Teddington, 1871. Photo: Ian Lochhead.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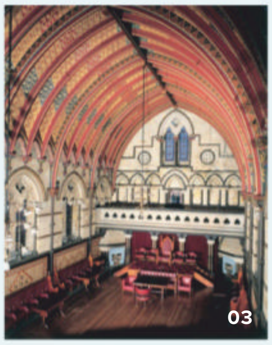
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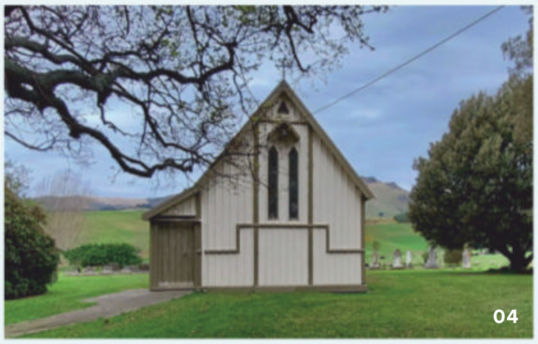
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each one having, as Samuel Hurst Seager noted in 1900, “some special feature making it distinctive; yet in all there is an expression of individual feeling, giving them – simple and inexpensive though they are – a high place among our architectural works”. These qualities were celebrated 50 years later in W.A. Sutton’s iconic, regionalist landscape, *Nor’wester in the cemetery* (1950). Mountfort’s wooden churches range in size from the tiny St Peter’s, Teddington, (1871) to the grand at St Paul’s, Papanui, (1876–1878) but all share a common vocabulary of steeply pitched roofs, vertical board and batten cladding, active string courses that reflect the liturgical functions of the interior, open timber roofs and, in the larger examples, arcades of massive timber posts with arched braces. Amongst this wealth of wooden buildings, St Mary’s, Otaio, in South Canterbury, is a notable exception, a jewel-like memorial church of crisply detailed limestone, looking as fresh today as it did when it was completed in 1880.

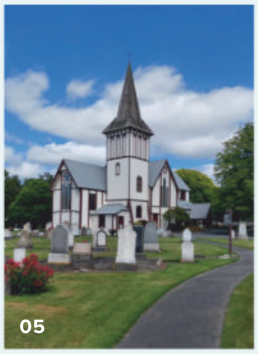
Although he was initially unsuccessful in gaining the position of supervising architect for George Gilbert Scott’s design for Christ Church Cathedral when construction began in 1864, he assumed that role when work recommenced in earnest in 1873 and saw the building through to the completion of nave and tower in 1881. He was responsible for the redesign of the spire and the furnishing of the building, as well as for the temporary wooden chancel that served until the completion of the transepts and choir in 1901. By the mid-1870s, with work on the Cathedral advancing, Mountfort was engaged in a wide range of buildings that helped to define the architectural character of Victorian Christchurch.

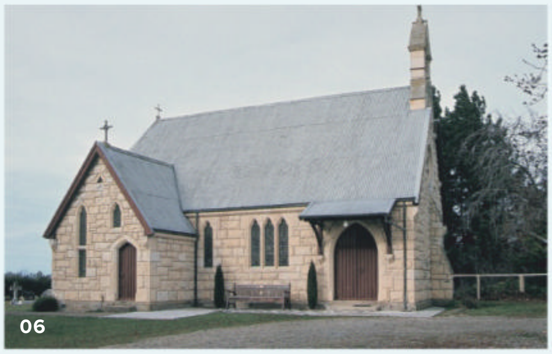
At the Canterbury Museum, between 1870 and 1882, he designed, in stone and timber, a sequence of galleries that was a colonial response to the iron and glass halls of Deane and Woodward’s Oxford University Museum of Natural History (1855–1860). Adjacent to the museum, his buildings for Canterbury College evolved over the next two decades, from 1876 to 1896, into a remarkable complex of Victorian Gothic buildings, establishing the architectural character of the college to which subsequent architects adhered well into the 20th century.

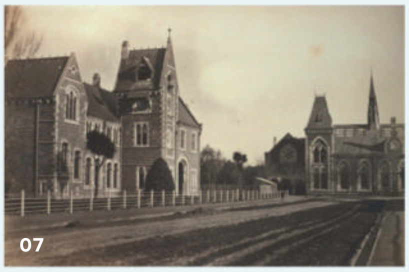
Mountfort’s use of a saddleback roof on the clock tower of his first college building and the segmental arch of its entrance gave Canterbury College a distinctly different architectural character from that of the neighbouring museum; he clearly wanted to ensure that the city’s architecture achieved variety while still conforming to the dominant Gothic Revival style. The Great Hall of what is now The Arts Centre of Christchurch Te Matatiki Toi Ora shows the freedom that Mountfort had achieved by the 1880s in manipulating the vocabulary of medieval architecture in an original and personal way. The form of the roof is generated by the segmental arch of the large, north window. Its curvature defines the shape of the ridge and furrow ceiling and necessitated the reduction of the interior roof span through the use of hammer beams. Although the components of the design are traditional, they are combined in an unexpected and original manner. Unlike the polychromatic richness of the earlier Provincial Council Chamber, the College Hall uses a more subtle palette, creating what was described as a ‘symphony of native timbers’ through the juxtaposition of woods from different native species.

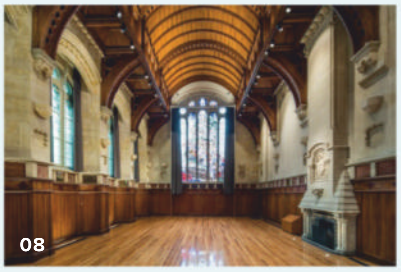
Throughout a career of nearly 50 years in New Zealand, Mountfort maintained exemplary professional standards and was, in his role as first president of the Canterbury Association of Architects, a pioneer in the process that led to the foundation of the New Zealand Institute of Architects in 1905. He was adventurous in exploring new materials, including both concrete and iron, and his designs for furniture and stained glass reveal the same inventiveness as that applied to his buildings. Almost 60 years ago, Paul Pascoe, a pioneering modernist, recognised the significance of Mountfort’s contribution to New Zealand architecture, describing him as “an architectural giant among the sandhills, swamps and open spaces of the Canterbury Plains… a genius working in the raw materials and severely crude limitations of the early days…”. Pascoe recognised Mountfort as a founding father of New Zealand architecture and it is for this achievement, 200 years after his birth, that we should continue to celebrate him today.

Ian Lochhead









05 St Paul’s Anglican Church, Papanui, Christchurch, 1876–1878. Photo: Ian Lochhead.

06 St Mary’s Anglican Church, Otaio, 1880. Photo: Ian Lochhead.

07 Canterbury College and Museum c. 1880. Photo: Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

08 Great Hall, The Arts Centre of Christchurch Te Matatiki Toi Ora, 1882. Photo: The Arts Centre.

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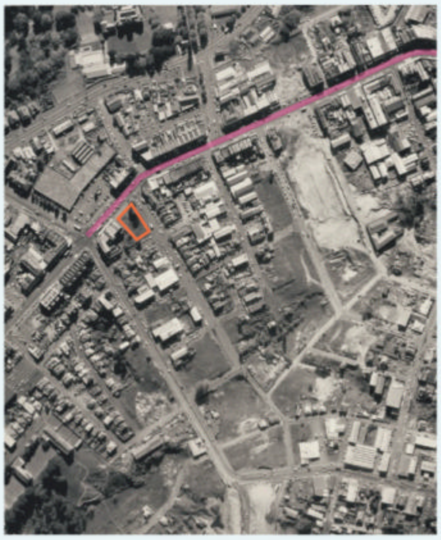
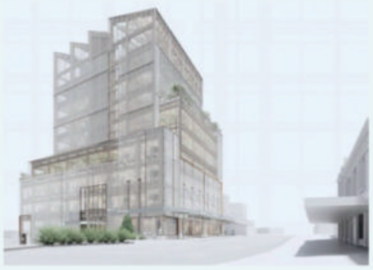
AN EPIPHANY AT 538 KARANGAHAPE ROAD

Anthony Vile advocates for critical public discourse when it comes to matters relating to the RMA and urban intensification.





Imagery: Supplied.

In late March, a proposal for a commercial development on a high-profile site in Auckland central was generating some emotional reactions across the motu, as reflected on my social media feed. “Insanity” is how Resource Management Act (RMA) Reform Minister Chris Bishop termed Auckland Council independent hearing commissioners’ rejection of plans for a new $100-million office building near the $5.5 billion-plus publicly funded City Rail Link (CRL). Wow, I thought, what were they proposing, a nuclear plant?

Digging deeper turned up some facts that were missing from the public discourse. If we are serious about building a world-class city, we need critical public discourse. The city becomes a concrete manifestation of that discourse. Without it, we are destined to repeat old patterns.

538 K’ ROAD: THE FACTS [1]

2021: Consent granted for a six-level building (approx. 5200m^2), adding three levels atop an existing mixed-use structure.

2023: New consent sought for a 10–11-level commercial building, including retail, F&B, offices and 48 basement car parks.

The site sits in the Auckland City Centre Zone, within the Karangahape Road Precinct and the Karangahape Road Historic Heritage Area, so extra layers of policy apply. The application was deemed non-complying for two key reasons:

1. Floor area ratio (FAR): Proposed FAR was 6.55:1 – more than double the allowed 3:1
2. Height: Proposed height exceeded the limit by more than 27m on K’ Road, and 35m on Abbey Street. Maximum height in the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) is 15m.

This triggered a review under Section 104D of the RMA, where non-complying activities may proceed only if effects on the environment are no more than minor, or the activity is not contrary to plan objectives and policies.

The key resource management matters requiring assessment relate to the additional height and floor area proposed for the building and the associated effects from the built form and scale of the development on the distinctive character of the area, on historic heritage values and on adjacent public streets and sites.

The principal issues in contention are:

- building height, bulk, massing and materiality
- compatibility with the Karangahape Road Historic Heritage Area (HHA) and Karangahape Road Precinct.

The Government’s National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) 2022 directs Auckland Council to enable more building height and housing density within and around Auckland’s city centre, metropolitan centres and rapid transit stops.

Plan Change 78 (PC 78) remained in process at the time with the proposed amendments to the City Centre Zone rules, including the removal of the floor area ratio standard and 35m general height standard on the K’ Road ridge, having no legal effect.

As non-complying consent, the applicant decided to have the Resource Consent (RC) publicly notified. They also lodged a submission on PC 78 Central Zone asking for removal of the Karangahape Road Precinct overlay from their site.

There were 32 public submissions against the project with a high proportion from local residents. Submitters had the opportunity to present their cases to the Independent Hearings Panel. Democracy in action.

“While the site could accommodate increased height, the design, scale and bulk must be consistent with the relevant provisions of the Karangahape Road Precinct and the Karangahape Road HHA.” Jeremy Brabant Barrister was speaking for Samson Corp with regard to its submission.

“… the introduction of an overbearing mass along the Karangahape Road frontage was the heart of the issue” – Chris Butler, urban designer for Council.

Reading of the RC hearing decision report highlights

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Aerial photo of Karangahape Road and Newton Gully in 1968. Historical context showing earthworks for Spaghetti Junction underway. K’ Road and 538 highlighted.
Ref 25–27, Aerosurveys, Tauranga.
The Church of the Epiphany, Karangahape Road, 1910. The church burnt down in the 1950s. Photographer: Henry Winkelmann, 1860–1931.
The James Kirkpatrick Group $100-million mass timber building, proposed for 538 Karangahape Road. Image as per RC documents. It is understood the design has been subject to further revisions.

the experience and talent of the teams involved. It also highlights the depth of discourse that occurs and the critical issues that need more public airing.[2]

The developer, understandably, wanted to maximise the development potential for the site, its consultants using expertise to deliver the end goal of a speculative investment that will deliver profit. Our council also performed its role working with the frameworks and legislation in place at the time to manage an outcome that would address the developer's idea of feasibility, the architect's idea of beauty and the engineer's idea of efficiency.

The proposal was taken through a process; it was reviewed by council experts, including the Urban Design Panel and, ultimately, rejected.

Insanity is the wrong word; it's an outcome of a rigorous legal and civic process. It is assumed all parties understand the risks associated with any particular consenting strategy and, at the end of the day, you give it your best shot.

The outcome of this process perhaps demonstrates that it was the wrong scheme at the wrong time in the wrong place.

COMMISSIONERS' DECISION

On consideration, the Auckland Council's independent hearing commissioners declined the application. The commissioners found that the proposal failed to meet the tests under the RMA and was contrary to the objectives and policies of the Auckland Unitary Plan. The principal concern was the scale of the development, which was considered to have more than minor adverse effects on the environment and the heritage values of the area.

"We find that the proposal is likely to have effects particularly on character and amenity that are more than minor. In terms of the height and massing, the proposal in its current form fails to avoid the adverse dominance and amenity effects on Karangahape Road and Gundry Street."

End of story? Not quite. The decision by the Independent Hearings Panel on PC 78 City Centre Zone has now been confirmed.[3] The City Centre Zone, including Karangahape Road, has been endorsed to enable more liberal development to occur: unlimited building heights in the core city centre; up to 72.5m in other areas, except where special height controls or qualifying matters apply.

FAR standards have been removed to provide developers with more flexibility in building design, within other constraints like tower dimensions and setback controls.

For K' Road, the proposed height limit has been confirmed at 35m, with further constraint managing development through qualifying matters and further council discretion. The heritage area remains intact but the removal of 538 K' Road and the whole western block from Gundry Road to Newton Road from the Karangahape Road Precinct has also been confirmed.[4]

This decision, in essence, lessens the focus of the site on context and heritage. The block removed also contains the pub which, coincidentally, is named The Dog's Bollix. Let's hope this decision doesn't enable a development that, in 100 years, calls out to its people as such.

For me, this story is really an opportunity to highlight issues about which we, the public, designers and developers, need to continue having a healthy discourse.

What is heritage when it applies to a place, not just a building? Precinct-level protection values the ensemble: buildings, spaces, relationships and the intangible history they hold. It's about the whole place, not just parts. It requires a dynamic view across space and time.

When communities value a place, culturally or socially, what responsibility do developers carry to respect that story? We should incentivise positive outcomes, where design innovation and heritage coexist.

Could we adopt precinct-level planning around CRL stations – establishing bulk, height and land-use expectations in advance? This would give developers certainty, communities a voice and councils a baseline for quality.

Why can demolition precede consent for replacement buildings? In a city centre, vacant lots and Wilson car parks are an anti-urban strategy. Shouldn't we offer short-term leases or pop-ups instead of hoardings and revenue-generation car-storage yards?

In the race to intensify, how do we maintain balance? Commercial vs residential, short-term yield vs long-term value, private gain vs public good – this is the realm of urban design. Maximising yield isn't the brief for a mature city. The tensions between competing outcomes are where design magic happens.

The need to maximise intensification still needs to be measured against outcomes and public good. Our heritage and cultural stories are too precious to ignore for the primacy of individual property rights.

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[1] aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/ResourceConsentHearingDocuments/rc-538-k-road-decision-2024-10-11.pdf

[2] "If it is part of the walls of public life, you are in public service." Thomas Heatherwick on the the responsibility of designing in urban space, dezeen.com/2025/06/03/public-ignorant-thomas-heatherwick-interview/

[3] aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/ UnitaryPlanDocuments/02-pc78-cc-ihp-recommendation-report.pdf

[4] The Panel, following its site visit, is not satisfied that the "distinctive built form and streetscape character" of the Karangahape Road Precinct extends to the block in question and we do not consider that the block aligns well with the precinct description especially when considering the requirements of the NPS-UD Policy 3(a) (maximising intensification).

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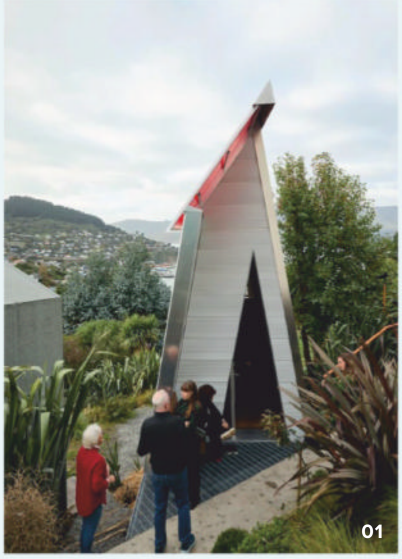
OPENING EYES, MINDS AND HEARTS

Dorita Hannah visits **Te Pūtahi**'s annual **Open Christchurch** event and finds a blueprint for sharing Aotearoa's unfolding architectural heritage.



Opening a city's architecture to the general public is both an act of generosity and a demonstration of urban porosity, which is fast becoming historical practice. Recent generations take the proliferation of security barriers, regulatory signage and surveillance for granted, while many of us remember churches, urban yards and campuses being open 24/7, including the ability to move through public institutions without scrutiny. This was predicated on self-organising citizens, mindful of spatial protocols and responsible for their own embodied navigation of the city and its sites of communal gathering.

It was, therefore, heartening to attend the fifth iteration of Open Christchurch (2–4 May) where 51 public sites opened their doors, gates and stories to an ever-increasing audience. This demonstrated the public's appetitite for contemporary and heritage architecture while enabling a general self-navigation of human flow, aided by the supportive presence of volunteers, making an event like this possible and pleasurable. And there's great enjoyment in being guided through architecture by its authors, experts and guardians: this year ranging from Buddhist nuns caretaking Warren and Mahoney's Fo Guang Shan Temple (2006); urban innovators, such as Three Sixty Architecture forming a creative community in The Yard (2018); cultural kaitiaki exemplified in Royal Associates Architects' intergenerational development of Korako Whānau Papakāinga (2023) on ancestral land; and exuberant spatial visionary, Michael O'Sullivan, warmly receiving guests at Bull O'Sullivan's Lyttelton Studio Retreat 2015–2025, with its tiny Chapel of St Thérèse of Lisieux, which had only just been completed. The latter asymmetric structure – a steeply rising apex fabricated from aluminium, timber and polycarbonate sheeting – houses an exquisite whakairo crucifix. Clinging to the steep site, this votive construction is the latest in a series of idiosyncratic hybrid spaces – evoking the Athfields' sprawling hillside complex in Wellington's Khandallah – and is the architects' "gift of thanks" to Christchurch's public for their post-quake embrace of the practice.

As a gift in itself, Open Christchurch is testament to the city and its inhabitants who have experienced trauma in the significant events of the 2010–2011 earthquakes and 2019 mosque shootings. The city has been further challenged by the Covid pandemic and the disruptive process of its phoenix architecture, charged with rebuilding infrastructure and community alongside the city's identity and resilience. As buildings slowly fill empty sites, we are asked to imagine future laneways and interstitial courtyards planned to stitch together an emerging fabric. New developments are encouraged to recognise pre-colonial history and cultural narratives that were previously repressed in this most anglicised of New Zealand cities.

The truly innovative feature of Open Christchurch is the existence and development of its hosting organisation, Te Pūtahi Centre for Architecture & City Making, led by co-founder Dr Jessica Halliday and her small-but-perfectly-formed team, which increases in number around the time of the event to include necessary specialists and those vital volunteers. Inspired by Open House London, Halliday took almost 20 years to get the Christchurch version under way, attentively curated to acknowledge Te Tiriti while considering locals, visitors and the particular cultural context of Ōtautahi in Aotearoa. Billed as an "annual one-weekend-only festival of exceptional architecture" – and advised by a Building

01–02 Chapel of St Thérèse of Lisieux (Bull O'Sullivan Architecture, 2025). Images: Sarah Rowlands.

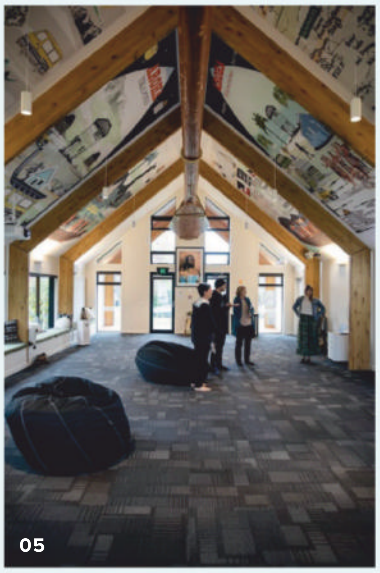
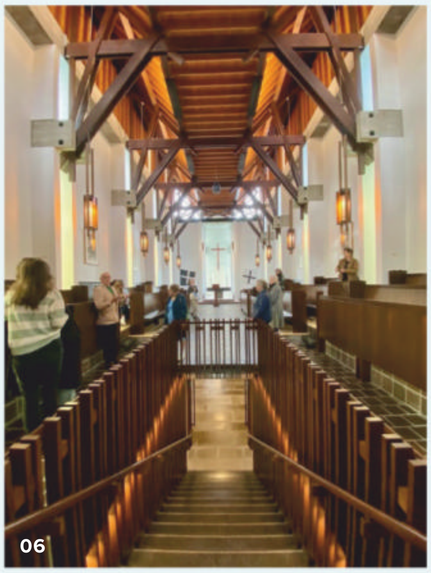
03 Children of the Christchurch Modernists at Chateau on the Park, now DoubleTree by Hilton (Beavan Hunt Associates, 1975). Image: Peanut Productions.

Council of specialists supported by a dynamic board of young creatives – the overall design celebration includes walks, talks, tours and, this year, two special evening events: one focusing on the city's modernist legacy; and another more broadly on the role of meeting halls in New Zealand society.

Children of the Christchurch Modernists was held in the curiously medieval-modern hall of Peter Beavan's Chateau on the Park (1975), now DoubleTree by Hilton, where the mature offspring of departed architects presented their fathers' legacies, each selecting a distinctive building for discussion. However, it was the opening event, Beyond Walls: The Power of Wharenui and Great Halls that set the tone for this particular festival, which also celebrated Benjamin Mountfort (1825–1898), the city's pre-eminent 19th-century architect born two centuries ago and famed for his Gothic Revival buildings. Convened in the Great Hall of Mountfort's Canterbury College (1882), which was restored as Te Matatiki Toi Ora The Arts Centre by Warren and Mahoney (2017), the event assembled an impressive line-up of contemporary historians, architects and cultural specialists, presenting beneath a soaring barrel-vaulted ceiling. What became clear was not only a continuing need for such community spaces, but the criticality of the wharenui: an ancestral embodiment with its embedded stories and lower, flatter gable roof, referred to by Amiria Kiddle (Ngāti Porou, Ngāpuhi) as a more intimate womb-like space she likened to a whare tangata. Nic Low (Ngāi Tahu) sees such a place as one for "imagining other worlds". This sense of intimacy and dialogue is encapsulated in Field Studio's modest design of Te Iho o te Ora (2022) for Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi, a kaupapa Māori youth organisation with rangatahi and Ngāi Tahu artists contributing to narratives in the architecture. Set amidst ingeniously arranged portacabins, the whare's identity as a community hub is enhanced by graphic ceiling panels, the massive tōtara hoe hung between timber portals and a northern wall of window seats.

The festival's programme revealed a wealth of local venues for assembling communities, including: Warren and Mahoney's meticulously renovated Christchurch Town Hall (1972, 2019) with its Douglas Lilburn Auditorium, internationally recognised as a masterpiece of concert hall architecture; Wilkie + Bruce's The Piano (2016), dedicated to serving musicians and audiences with acoustically refined practice rooms and performance spaces; and The Court Theatre (2025), a notable collaboration between Athfield Architects and UK-based Haworth Tompkins Studio, opening to great fanfare during the weekend. With an impressive array of sacred spaces, including many by Mountfort, it was a special treat gaining access to Warren and Mahoney's Chapel of the Upper Room in College House (1967), faithfully restored by Wilkie + Bruce (2022). Hosting fewer religious services, this extraordinary modernisation of the Oxbridge tradition offers a place of sanctuary for students privileged to inhabit its hallowed hall of residence.

By opening those doors, gates and stories, Te Pūtahi aims "to open people's eyes, minds and hearts" towards a flourishing city "that amplifies their sense of joy, meaning and belonging". This exemplifies the Māori principle of manaakitanga, extending beyond welcoming guests and exhibiting generosity to uphold community responsibility and reciprocity. To build for its future, Aotearoa must recognise its past and acknowledge its present, especially regarding the creative role played by architecture. Through Te Pūtahi, Open Christchurch provides an effective model for knowledge-sharing via culturally sensitive curation that plays into the public's curiosity and imagination, informing them as citizens capable of demanding life-enhancing quality environments.

04 Amiria Kiddle of Field Studio presents the wharenui at Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi, Te Iho o Te Ora (Field Studio, 2022). Image: Peanut Productions.

05 Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi's wharenui, Te Iho o te Ora (Field Studio, 2022). Image: Peanut Productions.

06 College House's Chapel of the Upper Room (Warren and Mahoney, 1964–1967; restoration and alterations by Wilkie + Bruce, 2022). Image: Sarah Rowlands.

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STÄRKE

People, place and culture

Michael Ware, a director of **Designgroup Stapleton Elliott** (DGSE), reflects on the studio's unique evolution, exploring the bold trajectory of this people-centric practice.

01

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Though I originally pushed back on the idea of narrating this article, I quickly realised that I hold a unique insight into our studio's evolution – in many ways, I've been witness to the fascinating trajectory of the practice. I guess this makes me the ideal candidate. Joining Designgroup Stapleton Elliott (DGSE) as a clean-shaven and enthusiastic architectural graduate in 2011, I've watched as a close-knit Wellington and Palmerston North studio of 24 turned into a humming team of 130+ across six locations within Aotearoa. Of course, that's just part of the story – our origins stretch back 50 years earlier.

While I happen to be the voice behind this piece, we see ourselves as a design collective, with many others contributing behind the scenes. I want to pay homage to the founding principals who paved the way for who we are today. At DGSE, we live and breathe a singular, unifying mantra – "enriching lives through architecture". This pithy little one-liner might seem obvious at face value but it's deeply embedded within everything we do – in fact, it's even more relevant today than it has been ever before.

THE GENESIS OF A BIG IDEA

With roots back to 1965, when Reg Stapleton started up in Lower Hutt, and 1974, when Brian Elliott began his practice in Palmerston North, the company has been building up to what it is today – from a couple of small practices in the Lower North Island to something a bit bigger, but with that same nimble personability that runs deep within our DNA. To discuss the birth of DGSE, I first need to touch on Designgroup New Zealand (DGNZ) – a collective of like-minded practices formed from an idea of Brian's in the late 1980s. The purpose of this collective was to provide clients with greater access to architectural expertise and resources than might otherwise be obtainable. Designgroup Stapleton Architects (DSA) and Designgroup Elliott Architects (DEA) were friends and founding members of that alliance, proceeding to work together on several successful DGNZ projects, including extensive work for UCOL and winning a bid by design competition for a new Ministerial Building at Parliament worth circa $100 million. Sadly (although possibly unsurprisingly), a change in government saw this significant project shelved at the end of Detailed Design.

Jumping forward to 2009, after a long-standing collaborative partnership, Brian suggested to DSA that both practices would benefit from a much stronger business and design relationship. "The principals each had such unique and diverse skill sets, ages and backgrounds – it made so much bloody sense," recalls Brian. And so, Designgroup Stapleton Elliott emerged, comprising eight principals – Brian Elliott, Nigel Dong, Mark Young, Neil Kemp, Craig Roberts, Mike Evans, John Sik and Gordon Morrison.

With the birth of DGSE, Brian – who had been an NZIA President and an AERB/NZRAB Board member – was given the task of leading the new entity with Nigel and Mark, who set about producing a new company constitution to underpin the direction and performance of DGSE into the future. This constitution set out the core directions of the company, including a flat management structure and a wide key employee shareholding. We were poised to shake up the industry, just in time for the dreaded GFC to rear its ugly head.

01 Waiaroha – Heretaunga Water Discovery Centre (2024) in partnership with Hastings District Council, Ngāti Kahungunu and Wayfinder. Photo: Alex McVinnie.

02 Founding principals (2009) from left to right – Mark Young, Gordon Morrison, Nigel Dong, Craig Roberts, Brian Elliott, John Sik, Neil Kemp and Mike Evans. Photo: Supplied.

OUR GROWTH AND GROWING UP

It wasn't the best of times, in 2009, to start a new practice – work was scarce and the economic downturn had people running for the hills. However, the newly merged practice had some exciting projects on the horizon. From the outset, we adopted a war cry that no project was too small and this helped us ride the turbulence of the tougher times. To this day, we maintain this same philosophy as strong believers that even the simplest architecture can present the greatest opportunities.

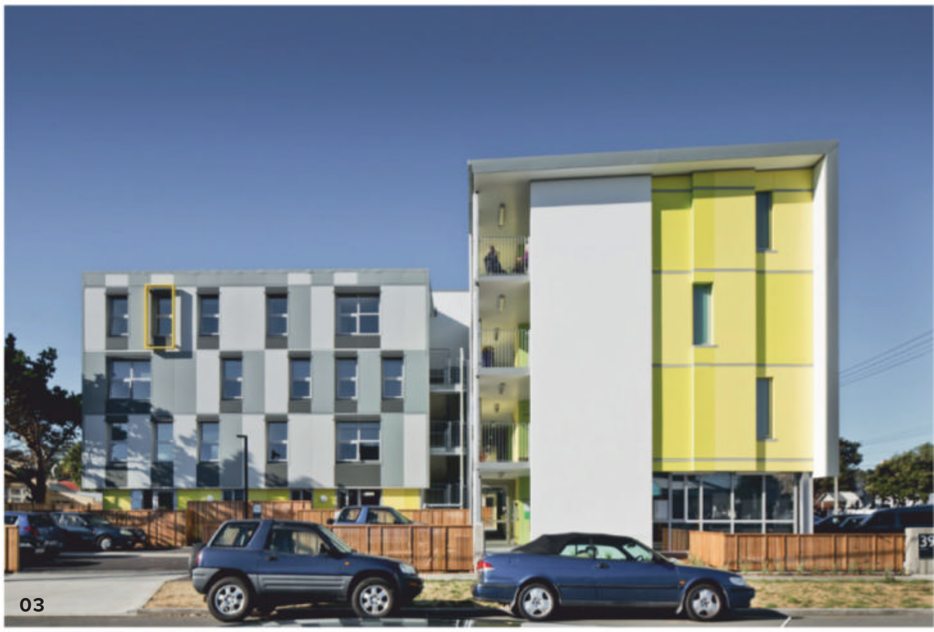
I joined the practice in 2011 and I still remember my interview with Nigel. I was living in Sweden when I had my first meeting over the phone at 12am, with a second interview a week later in person. It was a tough time for graduates to find work. I was a relatively fresh graduate with an enthusiasm for design and some technical experience, having worked as an architectural technician in a previous life – I guess either that or wearing a suit to the interview (on advice from the recruiter) sealed the deal! From the beginning, Craig, who drove the design direction of DGSE, 'gave me the pen,' so to speak, to be an active contributor, not a spectator nor an observer. Craig taught the concept of the 'after image' as he would call it. If you can simply draw by memory the intent or spirit of the architecture, it proves a potent design clarity: simple, refined, clear and concise. This approach, coming from an extremely accomplished, national-award-winning architectural practice, demonstrates the intrinsic collaborative nature of DGSE. Over those next few years, we delivered some ground-breaking people-centric stuff, including a new five-storey teaching block at Wellington Girls' College, and Wellington council housing developments at Regent Park and Marshall Court. We were out there doing big things with a comparatively lean team, starting to make our mark.

ONE STUDIO, ONE CULTURE

When I started, DGSE was small enough to have the office Christmas party at Brian's pint-sized bach – an intimate gathering with partners that would undoubtedly drag into the wee hours of the following day. As we continued to grow, so did the pains of holding onto our humble origins. From 24 staff in 2009, DGSE rapidly grew over the next decade and a half to a firm of 130+, across six regional locations. Building on Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington and Te Papaioea Palmerston North, we expanded into Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland in 2015. In search of that illusive work-life balance (or so the story goes), I set up our Tauranga Moana studio in 2018, followed by Ahuriri Napier's Designgroup PMA joining us later that same year. Most recently, our Tāhuna Queenstown studio has emerged in response to a handful of significant projects in the Central Otago region. It's never been our ambition to expand but, rather, this was borne from a nimble approach of seizing opportunities. We still work hard but we've managed to hold

03 Wellington City Council's Marshall Court, Wellington (2015), comprises 27 one-bedroom apartments for superannuitants. Photo: Paul McCredie.

04 Design in progress at DGSE. Photo: Gleeson & Royfee.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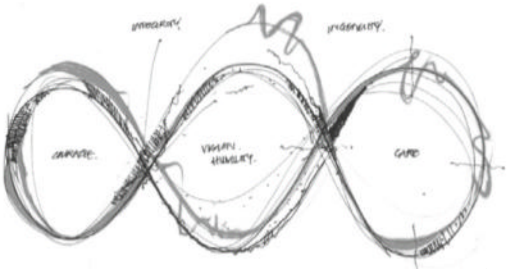
onto the essence of what has always defined us. Our people are at the heart of everything we do and, as Mike Evans notes, "we're a social and connected bunch, and that informality is a magnetic force that appeals to so many."

In 2015, the growth of the company necessitated a look at the leadership structure. Nigel Dong was identified as the natural successor to take over as managing director, in part thanks to one simple truth – everyone knows Nigel. As clients, consultants and fellow architects often ask, "where does he get his energy from?" He is the driving force behind DGSE as we stand today – a true leader who earns respect through dedication, determination and optimism, underpinned by an unrelenting work ethic.

Something that we like to think sets us apart in the industry is our one-studio mentality. This isn't just lip service but an intrinsic part of the way we operate. As a part of our growing pains, we relooked at our regional studio network within a national studio framework. As a result, DGSE became digitally enhanced, ensuring projects could be easily completed nationally by the best team for the job, with local on-the-ground support as required. The dreaded 'C' word of 2020 reinforced that the architectural discourse can successfully operate across physical and virtual spaces – we've honed this mentality into a responsive and agile national practice.



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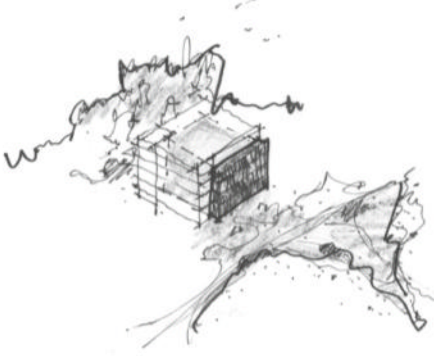

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WE GO TO SPACE
TO IMPROVE LIFE
ON EARTH

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DESIGN WITH PURPOSE

As mentioned, with our growth came both advantages and challenges. How do we maintain the soul of the company amidst such rapid expansion in both people and projects? How do we remain nimble while needing to implement new systems and processes?

The answer began to reveal itself with the arrival of new talent. With our diverse team – 52 per cent female and 48 per cent male, representing 20+ nationalities – our studio has become a vibrant collective of perspectives. Each person brings a distinct lens, shaped by their background, discipline and experiences. Recognising the value of this multiplicity,

05 Design process sketch investigating the value-centric approach to a new city centre.

06 Design process sketch investigating the ephemeral and permanent qualities of the landscape and built environments – their pūrākau, their stories.

07 Rocket Lab Corporate Headquarters, USA (2021).

08 Ministry of Education's Tauranga Boys' College (2023) new 12-classroom block. Photo: Amanda Aitken.

I formed a think-tank of skilled and diverse designers to work together to develop a new design process – one grounded in these varied perspectives and shaped around three guiding pillars: People, Place and Culture.

Since I became a director in 2023, my focus has been on nurturing our craft across the practice – helping ensure we remain leaders in the design of the built environment. We believe that every client is unique, and this is why we don't adhere to a singular aesthetic or style. Instead, each project is an opportunity to tailor a bespoke response – one that is user-centric and richly contextual.

While our projects vary widely, our approach remains constant. We begin every design by engaging deeply with people, place and culture – the pillars that anchor everything we do. We're a design-led practice that values both digital and analogue tools, taking a hands-on, exploratory approach to developing ideas. We believe in collective creativity – no matter your role, if you have an idea, we want it on the table. Everyone is encouraged to pick up that metaphorical 6B pencil and contribute.

In recent years, we've worked across an extraordinary range of project types – each one pushing our thinking and expanding our practice. Projects like Rocket Lab, Tauranga Boys' College and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency stand out. Though vastly different in scale and brief, they share a common thread of deep engagement. Whether it's meaningful collaboration with clients, experimental design processes or a deep-rooted connection to context – it's that spirit of engagement that defines our work.

Our refined design process begins with the formation of a design collective from project initiation – a multidisciplinary group that brings a diverse range of perspectives to the table. This collective is intentionally curated to represent varied lenses, enabling active contribution to the architectural discourse from the earliest stages of concept design. By embedding these voices at the outset, the pillars of people, place and culture become intrinsic to the design outcome.

A vital component of this evolution was the introduction of DGSE's Indigenous Design Rōpū (IDR), championed by Matamoana Nuku, Alex Heperi and Carinnya Feaunati, and supported by our broader community of Indigenous and Pacific architects, landscape architects, designers and technicians. The IDR plays a key role in ensuring that Indigenous views and knowledge systems are woven meaningfully and respectfully into our projects – not only enriching the work but grounding it in the cultural and environmental realities of Aotearoa and the wider Pacific.

09 Huruhi Bay House (2023). Photo: Sam Hartnett.

10 Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission (2021), co-design collaboration with Tihei's Rangi Kipa, and David Hakaraia. Photo: Jason Mann.

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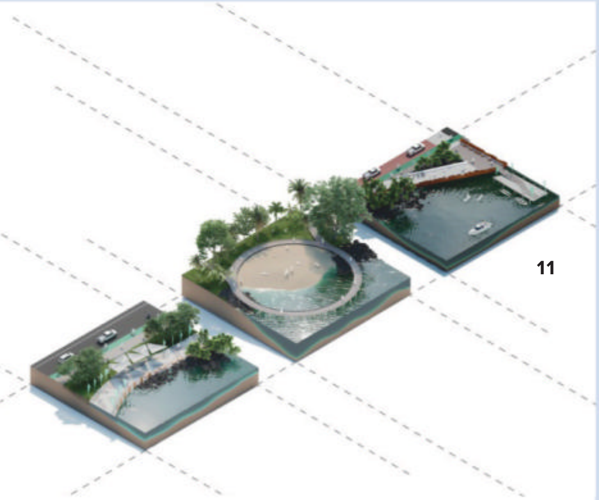
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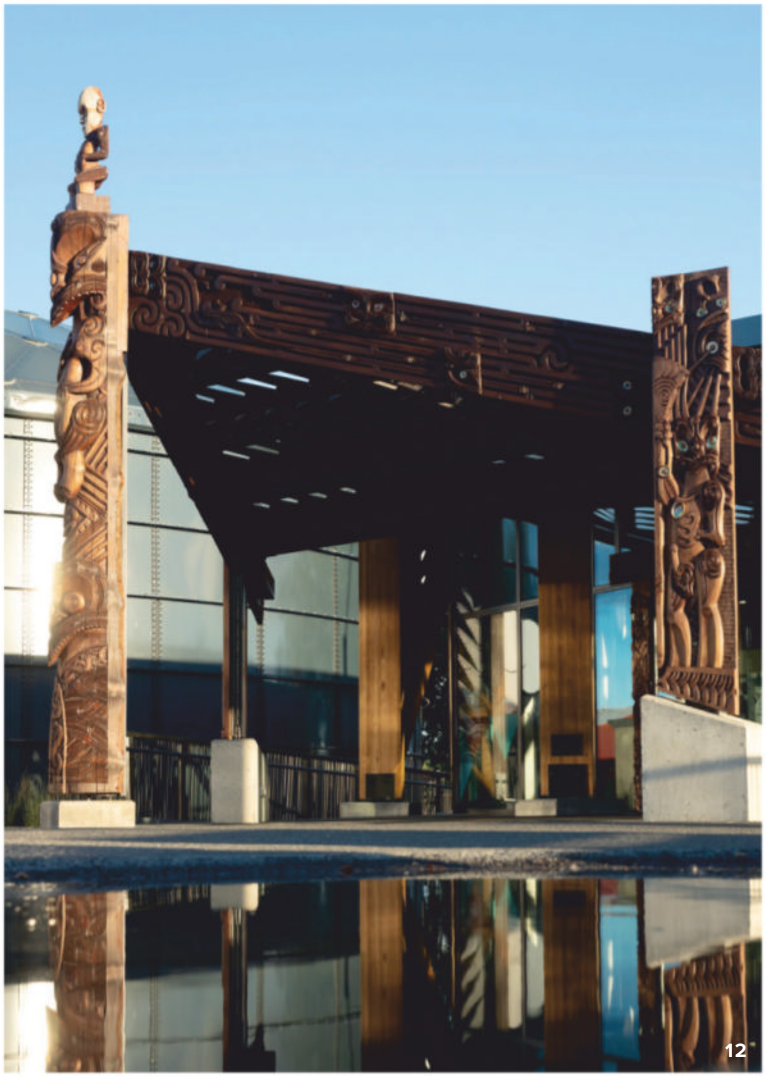
11 The American Samoa Pago Pago Harbor Revitalization Masterplan (2024) is a collaborative re-imagining of the active threshold where moana (sea) and fanua (land) meet. Render: DGSE.

12 Waiaroha – Heretaunga Water Discovery Centre (2024) in collaboration with Ngāti Kahungunu advisor Hira Huata, whakairo lead Charles Paringatai, and carvers. Photo: Alex McVinnie.

PROVIDING A VOICE

Through our process of design refinement and critical self-reflection, and with the guidance of the IDR, we were able to respond proactively to the shift in narrative that was happening at both a global and a national level. Architecture was no longer simply a shelter or status symbol but an opportunity to become a living expression of identity, belonging and whakapapa. Indigenous voices are transforming the ways in which buildings and spaces are made and what they mean, and are forging new relationships between people and whenua. Through nurturing this considered approach to design engagement, we've learned so much and we continue to grow in this space. As an example, in delivering Te Whanganui-a-Tara's Human Rights Commission, the design authorship and direction was manawhenua led – championed by revered manawhenua artists who imbued the space and, ultimately the organisation, with a kaupapa-led manifestation of a powerful karakia. Similarly, Waiaroha – Heretaunga Water Discovery Centre was a fully collaborative multidisciplinary undertaking, supported by our IDR team to ingrain a deep sense of place across the project. As Matamoana Nuku notes, "the perception of relinquishing design authorship can be a confronting thing for any designer but is critical if we are to achieve an outcome that is truly an authentic expression, rooted in people, place and culture."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THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY MOVEMENT

As our practice has continued to evolve and the complexity of our projects has increased, we've continued to bring an all-encompassing point of view to our clients – more so now through a truly nimble design offering. Perhaps a response to a more sustainable built environment, our landscape architecture team emerged from our desire to offer a holistic design response. As a foundation to so many of our projects, we seek to integrate the natural environment into everything we do – not just a frivolous embellishment but a proper entrenched approach to design and design process. Similarly, almost every project of ours deals with interior space. Over the years, we've developed an enviable expertise in this area, and our dedicated interior architecture team has allowed us to challenge the norms of design thinking by instilling highly immersive and uplifting spatial experiences. At its core, our built environment is a direct response to the human condition – it's this all-enveloping sensory experience that intrigues, inspires and transcends.

We have some pretty exciting work on the

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13 TSA Riley Auckland office (2023). Photo: Jono Parker.

14 Retreat (2024). DGSE with Crosson Architects in association. Photo: Simon Devitt.

15 Sunset West apartments (2021). Photo: Andy Spain.

16 Hyde Lane apartments (2024). Render: One to One Hundred.

17 Prayer Chapel (2024). Render: DGSE.

17

books right now and we're pumped for the next instalment of the DGSE story. From ground-breaking housing initiatives and work across the Pacific, to the development of an entirely new city for Aotearoa, we're looking up and we're excited to show off a trick or two. We have a culture that fosters creative thinking and we're intent on never staying static. Empowered by an ever-changing digital world, we're diving into new ways of doing things – pushing forward and bringing our clients with us.

I'm a firm believer that architecture can make profound impacts on our planet and our people. We're not just shaping the built environment; we're altering our relationship with nature, influencing social behaviour and paving the direction of our future. At DGSE, we acknowledge the weight of our responsibility as designers and approach every project with manaakitanga (care and respect). Our mission is to seek out the spirit of a place: the people and the cultural frameworks that imbue that context. It's with a deep understanding of each that our architecture stands to enrich the lives of those it touches. With every new client, project or challenge, DGSE continues to evolve and, through our work, we're stronger than ever.

Designgroup Stapleton Elliott (DGSE) is a nationwide practice with roots extending back over 50 years. Formed by a large team with diverse backgrounds and skills, we assist with a wide range of design services, including architecture, interior architecture, master-planning and landscape architecture. DGSE continues to evolve its processes, focusing on cultural identity and environmental impact. This development has become instrumental to our work and enables our team to align with our guiding purpose.

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After the rain

In part one of a six-part series, **Andrew Barrie** speaks to **Claude Dewerse** and **Mike LeRoy-Dyson** about their roles, and the ground-breaking methods they are developing, in disposing of 1200 disaster-compromised houses across Auckland city.

In wrestling with the fast-escalating challenges of delivering a low-carbon future, most Kiwi architects will have cottoned on to the associated need to transition to a circular economy. The local scene has, as yet, relatively few examples of this approach: among them Ged Finch's reusable X-Frame system, Athfield Architects' designed-for-disassembly Kaipātiki Eco Hub, and the Living Building Challenge's requirement for the minimisation and re-use of construction waste. But, in addition to dealing with the waste generated by current projects, we also need to grapple with what happens at the end of a building's life. As with other current shifts in design approach, the driving force may as yet be more demand from clients than leadership by architects.

In 2022, Auckland Council adopted a policy that forbade straight demolition of its buildings, instead mandating deconstruction and waste-reduction efforts. Firms that were interested in future council contracts put their names forward and had to demonstrate either a track record or the means to develop the required capacity and expertise. The process produced a 'deconstruction panel' of 11 contractors. Ranging from large demolition contractors to smaller material-recovery firms, they represented varying business models – some have yards where they can sell recovered materials, some give them away and so on. Firms from the panel soon became involved in civic projects, such as the recent deconstruction of the library in Point Chevalier and the current redevelopment of the Northcote and Avondale Community Centres.

Not long after this, on Auckland's Anniversary weekend in January of 2023, an atmospheric river dumped a month's worth of rain on the city in a day. Scenes of a kind Aucklanders had witnessed only on TV news reports from the provinces played out on the city's busy motorways and suburban streets. For some, notably damp and disappointed Elton John fans, the rain was merely an irritation. Those in other parts of the city faced unprecedented flooding that led to chaotic and surreal scenes: buses full of water, cars floating down streets, flooded airport terminals and, tragically, four deaths. It would become New Zealand's costliest weather event and, for many Aucklanders, would be the moment when the effects of climate change literally came to town.

01 Chris Barton and Andrew Barrie discuss the project with Claude Dewerse and Mike LeRoy-Dyson. Image: Luke Schwalger.

In the wake of the disaster, Auckland Council began a project with the Government to buy out home-owners that faced ongoing “intolerable risk to life” and whose houses shouldn’t be where they were. Following months of intense negotiations, the Government and the Council announced that they would each stump up $750 million – a total of $1.5 billion to buy out 600 houses. The Council provided additional funding for the clearing of the sites. Meanwhile, though, assessment processes were still ongoing around the city, and the number of houses slated for removal kept climbing and is now just under 1200. The condition of these homes varies widely; some were completely destroyed, some still stand in their flood-impacted state, while most have had their damage repaired by insurance companies. A few, at the top or bottom of now-unstable hillsides, are totally untouched.

The Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Office was set up as an arm of Auckland Council to coordinate the repair and rebuild efforts on behalf of the Council and the Government. Key parameters were defined by the Council’s own Waste Minimisation and Management Plan, which set the ambitious target of reducing waste to landfill to zero by 2040. To avoid a waste blow-out, the Recovery Office called in circular economy consultant Claude Dewerse and sustainability expert Mike LeRoy-Dyson to oversee the house-removal project. Their task was to work with the deconstruction panel contractors to ensure the pressures of the huge project didn’t prompt a return to the old ways. In disposing of the now-vacant houses, Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson asked a simple question: How can we do this differently?

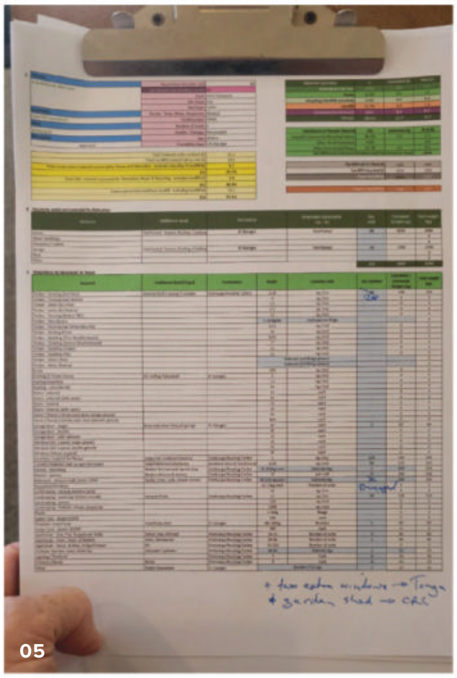
Removing a typical house generates about 100 tonnes of waste. (To give a point of reference, the 120,000 tonnes the houses might generate equates to over a month’s worth of the city’s total waste stream.) Discussions of waste reduction often focus on the notion of ‘landfill diversion’ – the percentage of a waste stream that doesn’t end up in landfill but goes to some other use. This metric, however, can be a crude one when measuring demolition waste. A very large portion of waste weight originates in concrete floor slabs, as well as in concrete driveways and landscaping. Concrete from demolition, however, very rarely goes to landfill – landfills charge by weight, which makes dumping concrete prohibitively expensive, and there are companies that receive broken concrete relatively cheaply, crush it and re-sell it as aggregate. In place of the crude diversion measure, Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson’s programme focuses on a recovery hierarchy:

- relocation of the house;
- re-use of materials or elements for their original use, such as framing timber, floorboards, windows, kitchen cabinetry, appliances and so on;
- recycling of glass, roofing, reinforcing steel and other metals;
- down-cycling – much of the timber from Auckland demolitions, for example, is chipped and used in place of coal to fire a cement plant in Whangārei;
- landfill.

The complexities will be evident. For example, with concrete representing a large proportion of waste weight, high by-weight diversion scores are possible by dealing with just this single material, and chipping timber may divert it from landfill but deposits its carbon into the atmosphere. For Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson, the goal is to

02 The top floor of a contemporary house is removed for relocation.

03 The floors, lining, insulation and fittings of a house are removed following flood damage.



+ two extra windows → Tonga
+ garden shed → CRC

push their 1200 houses as far as possible up this hierarchy.

Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson's first task for each house is an initial desktop analysis, through which they generally deem about half as relocatable. Information on these houses is sent to a group of registered organisations, generating offers on about half of them. This is the top of the recovery hierarchy – the house is reused, and the deal reduces the overall cost of cleaning up the site. The houses they assess as movable but for which they have received no offers become subject to negotiation – depending on the house, they offer subsidies of various sizes to the removal crews. Free market hardliners might argue the Council shouldn't be subsidising businesses, but Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson point out that the subsidies offered are still less than the cost of deconstruction and produce better outcomes because the houses have been reused. "We're trying to meet every contractor where they're at but trying to find places where we can keep pushing them."

Their innovative approach centres on a spreadsheet they call the Resource Recovery Schedule (RRS). Coming into full use when deconstruction is necessitated, the RRS lists all the various elements included in a typical house and is filled out by the contractors to estimate both how much of each type of material the house contains, and how much can be recovered. Shifting the definition of the task from waste management to resource management, the RRS becomes the starting point for negotiations. Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson push contractors to increase the volumes recovered and also set about finding destinations for recovered items. "If a house has good stuff in it, we can find places for it to go. We can make it economic." The RRS also provides a sophisticated measure for resource recovery, where previously the only measures were cost and simple diversion.

In working to increase the volume of material recovered during deconstruction, a key task has been to find a mechanism by which materials – framing timber, for example – can be put back into circulation. Demolition yards have traditionally been relatively small and tended to focus on specialist and higher-value materials for heritage restoration. To absorb the increased flow of materials, Auckland Council has been expanding its network of Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) to gather and sell items from (among others) the deconstruction contractors. The goal is that every Aucklander will be within 20 minutes of a centre. As the CRC network builds and capacity to deal with a range of materials develops, the vision is that they can become alternatives to big-box stores like Bunnings. Aside from the CRCs, Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson have been helping to connect other social enterprises to the project. Some materials, such as carpets still in good condition, native timbers or joinery, are able to be commercially reused.

Research by the Council has shown that, for every dollar that the Council spends preparing items for re-use rather than recycling or landfill, it returns more than $2 in social value. Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson point out that, while you might be able to demolish a house and send it

04 Some houses for removal remain in perfect condition; this one stands below an unstable cliff face.

05 A Resource Recovery Schedule being updated on site as the task evolves.

06 The deconstruction process under way on site.

07 Materials being prepared for sale at a Community Recycling Centre.

to landfill for $30,000, spending a few thousand more is effectively an investment in social outcomes and improvements. They point out that, "the Council, of course, has mandates around social outcomes."

As architects, we think of buildings as intrinsically valuable but, once a house has been severed from a particular site, the economics shift wildly. The costs of relocation or of removing and cleaning up materials can be very high relative to their re-sale value. This means that the residual value of materials and of whole houses can be very, very low. Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson cite the example of a house that was about to be relocated when it was struck by wayward teens who smashed the glass in all the windows. Compared with the actions of an earthquake or arsonist, the material damage was relatively slight, but the costs of repair were sufficient that the relocation became uneconomic, and the house was instead deconstructed.

For architects, for whom creating value is a painstaking and time-consuming process, it is astonishing to understand that a handful of stones can entirely erase a building's worth. Architects, though, might help increase the value of these recovered materials by simply using them in their buildings. "Because, if you've got demand," states Dewerse, "then recovery is a no-brainer." This will require a shift. Many recovered materials are flawless, but one of the tasks facing designers who want to participate in the circular economy is to set aside the 'hygiene' obsession that defined modernism and to develop architectural languages that can absorb imperfection: materials with patina; surfaces that tell stories; and history that is visible.

The range and volume of houses they are dealing with has given Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson an understanding of the many ways in which designers are unwittingly generating huge future liabilities. One problem they emphasise is the use of polystyrene, particularly through the very common practice of constructing concrete floors over pods or slabs of polystyrene. As noted above, demolition concrete can be fairly easily recycled but, when polystyrene enters the mix, it becomes a contaminant – pieces blow around deconstruction sites, and it takes considerable effort to remove it before the concrete itself can be recycled. "We reckon it's costing us more to get rid of polystyrene-embedded concrete pads than it costs to build the pads in the first place." They cite a recent example of a 230m^2 house with a waffle slab containing polystyrene pods – the cost of removing and disposing of the slab alone was $46,000. "It wouldn't surprise me if it cost $46,000 to put that pad down."

The scale of Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson's undertaking and their methodical approach mean their project can serve as a pilot study for what will be an ongoing challenge in Aotearoa. The project is the subject of a study by Paola Boarin, Mike Davis and Alessandro Premier, staff at Te Pare School of Architecture and Planning at Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland. Working as part of an international research consortium, they are seeking to understand the houses as a region-wide 'urban mine' from which resources can be extracted over time. They will carry out detailed modelling to develop an accurate understanding of the materials available within various types of house and at the various levels of the re-use hierarchy – in effect, they are backfilling the science and economics on the personal expertise Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson deploy through the RRS. By extrapolating this information to the whole region, the academics hope to optimise the use of the stream of resources that can be expected as climate change takes its inevitable toll.

Architecture NZ will report further on Dewerse and LeRoy-Dyson's project in upcoming issues, hoping to share the lessons architects might learn.

08 Vandals kicked in the linings throughout a house earmarked for relocation.

09 A typical slab demolition, with concrete and polystyrene intermingled and almost impossible to separate.

08

09

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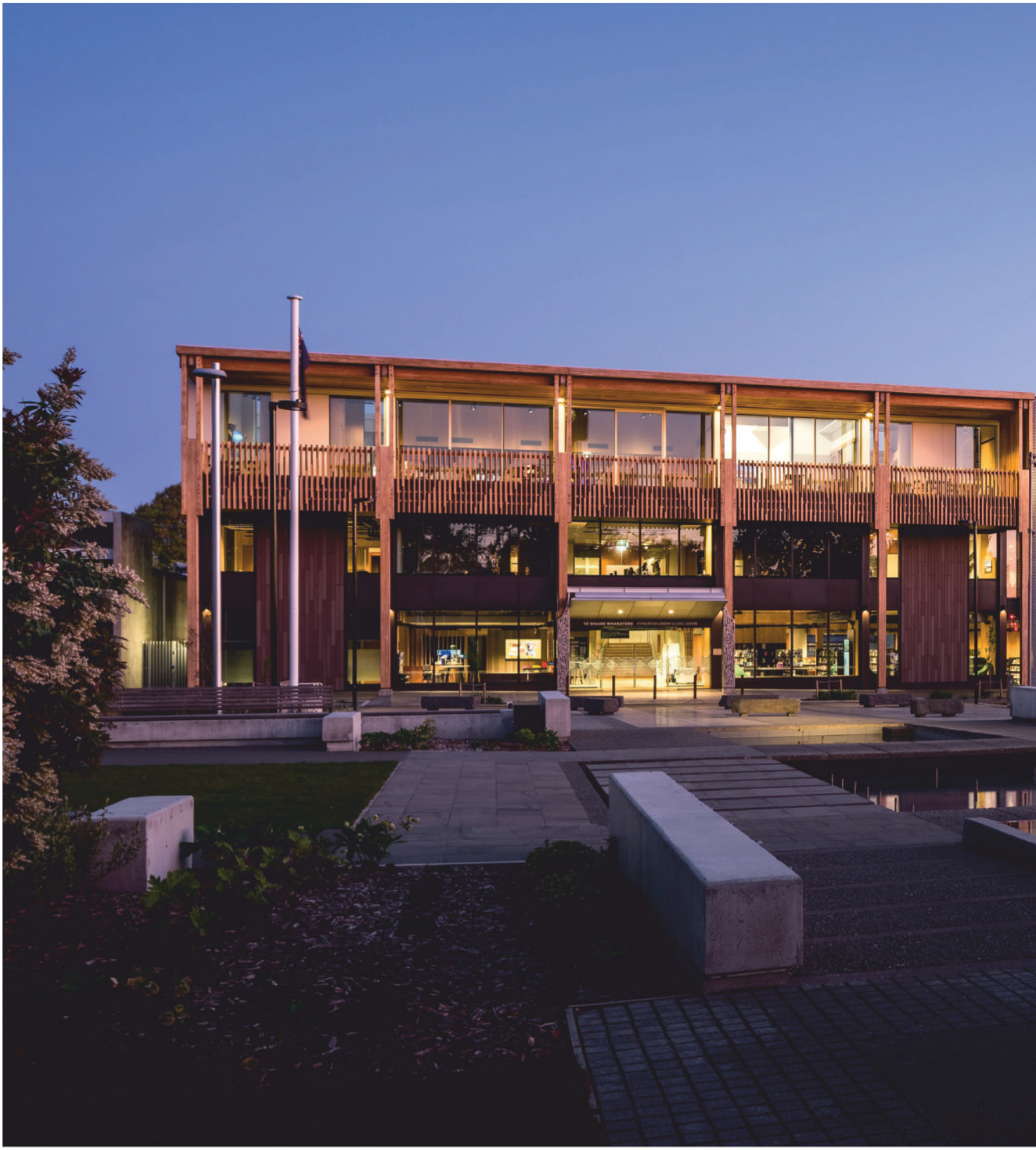
Horizon by SkyCity. Photograph: Sam Hartnett.

Work

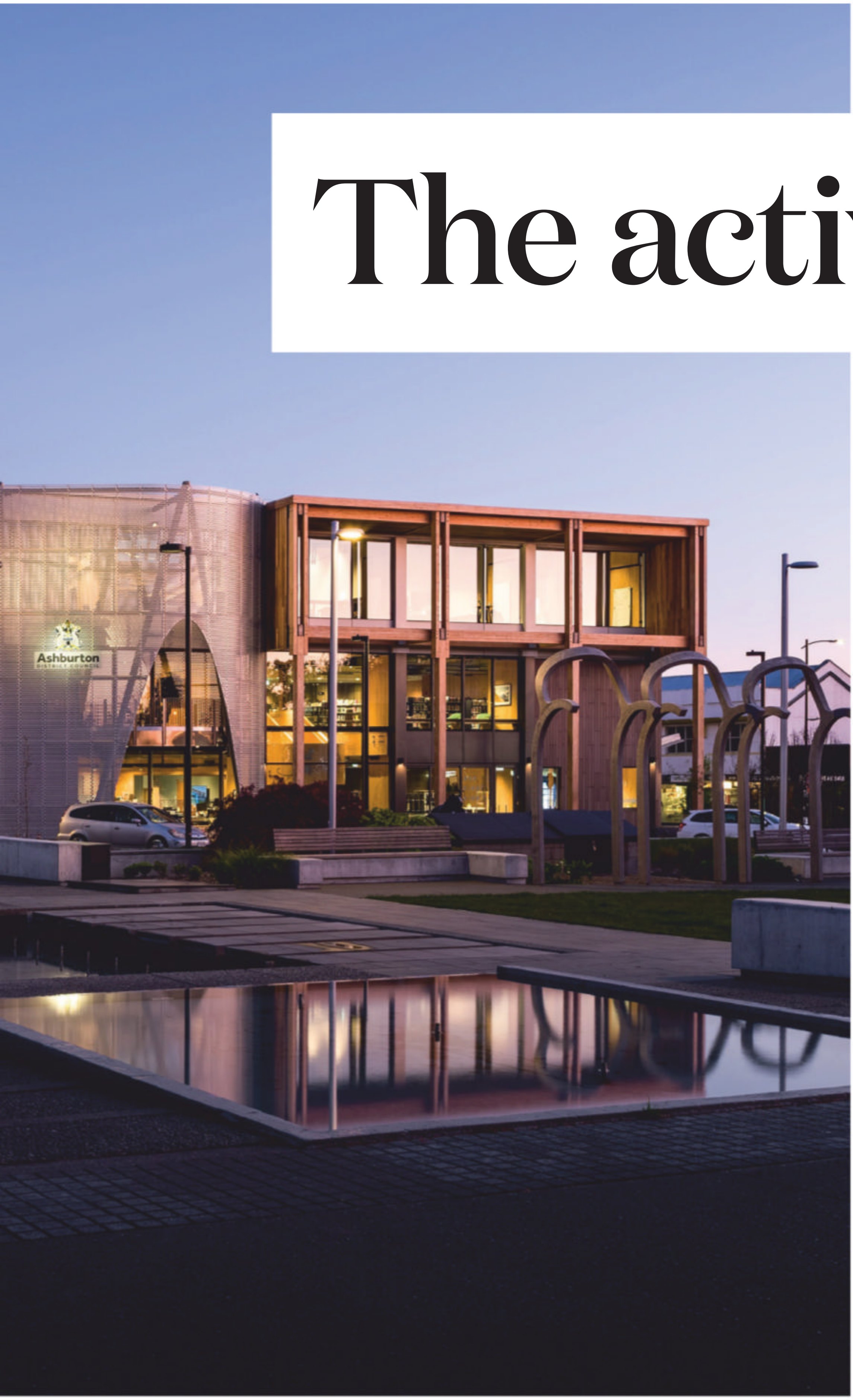
The activator – Te Whare Whakatere Ashburton Library and Civic Centre | Athfield Architects — p.50

Unfolding treasure boxes – Horizon by SkyCity | Moller Architects in association with Warren and Mahoney — p.58

Folded like origami – Urlar winery | DLA Architects — p.66


TE WHARE WHAKATERE

The activator



Abigail Hurst explores the weaving together of the multifaceted **Te Whare Whakatere,** the **Ashburton Library and Civic Centre,** by **Athfield Architects.**

Photography
SIMON WILSON

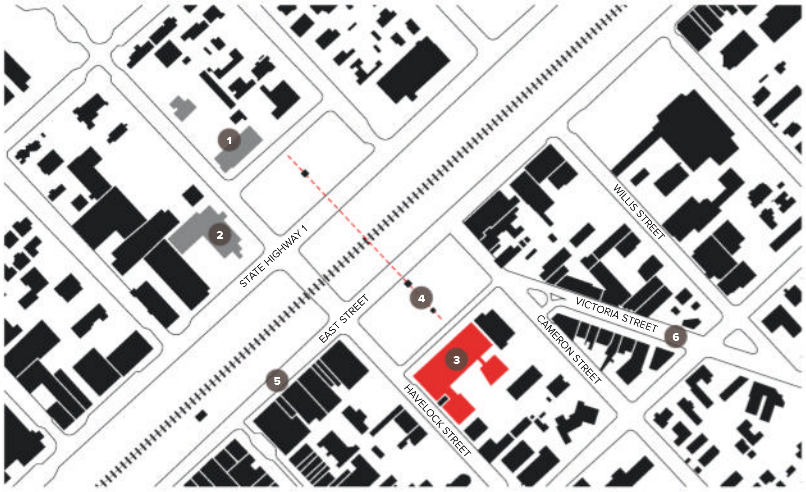
LEFT Te Whare Whakatere, Ashburton's new Library and Civic Centre, is viewed from across Baring Square.

GUMBOOTS, KIDS' SCOOTERS AND ZIMMER frames are not typically what comes to mind when thinking about the foyer of a local government office. Here at Te Whare Whakatere, Ashburton's new Library and Civic Centre, this get-around gear is commonly sighted, and is testament to the facility's accessibility to the diverse body of people that it serves.

Set beside the Ashburton River, on the east coast of the Cantabrian alluvial plains, Hakatere Ashburton is framed by fertile land and a strong agricultural history. This rural hub, just over an hour's drive south-west of Christchurch, is becoming increasingly gentrified with families seeking an affordable country lifestyle with city amenities close by. Its current population of 21,300 is set to almost double by 2030. Baring Square, Ashburton's historic centre, is named after the third baron of Ashburton, England, Francis Baring. State Highway 1 and the railway line bisect the town at this square, where the 1976 clock tower by Warren and Mahoney marks the County Council's centennial. Te Whare Whakatere addresses this tower and the square, with frontages also to Havelock Street, adjacent to the pedestrian-oriented high street. The proposal to unite the previous council office and library services was made when both buildings were found to be unfit for purpose and earthquake prone. Strategically relocated to the more walkable eastern side, the project has sparked revitalisation, with new cafés and bars activating once-quiet blocks.

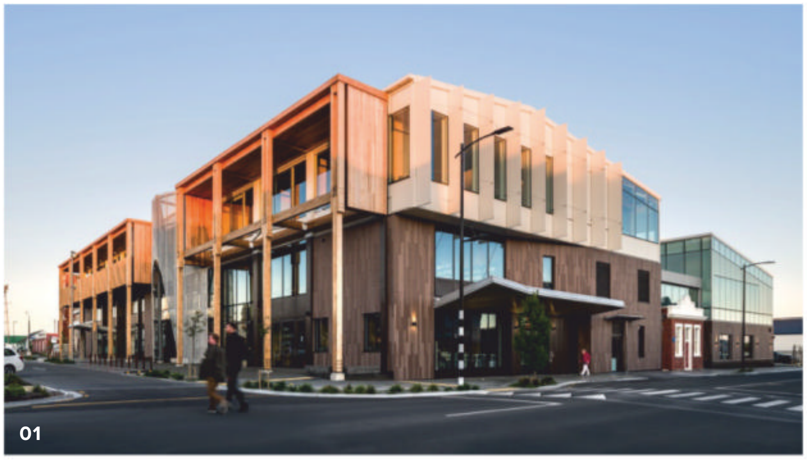
Impressions of feet mark Baring Square, re-landscaped alongside Te Whare Whakatere's construction, stepping towards the main entrance as well as away to the Southern Alps. They signify a historic journey, one that local iwi Arowhenua would make from the sea to the mountains through to the west coast in the search for pounamu. Arowhenua worked with local artist and Ngāi Tahu master carver Fayne Robinson to continue the cultural narrative, with particular treatment to the street entrances with carvings and designs of local flora and fauna. The integration of these elements is significant for the country town, and emblematic of a more open dialogue beginning with manawhenua, echoed inside.

During consultation, the Council offered three options and was surprised when the public voted for the 'big' one. In response, more diverse functions and additional room for the projected population growth were added. A makers' space, recording studio, café, event spaces and a learning lab, in addition to the library and civic facilities, made a unique combination that required sophisticated planning of security and circulation between private and public uses. Athfield Architects made several



SITE PLAN

1 EXISTING COUNCIL BUILDING
2 EXISTING LIBRARY
3 TE WHARE WHAKATERE
4 BARING SQUARE/ HISTORIC AXIS
5 TOWN CENTRE
6 AREA OF REGENERATION



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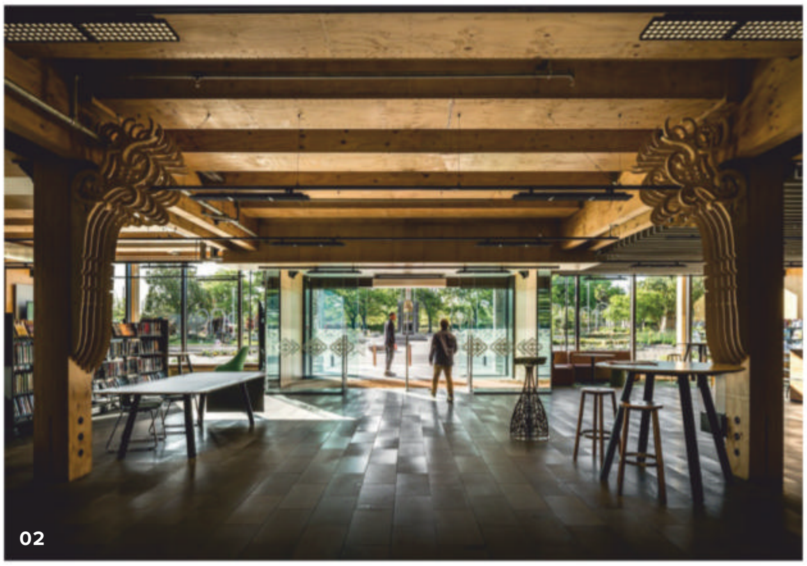
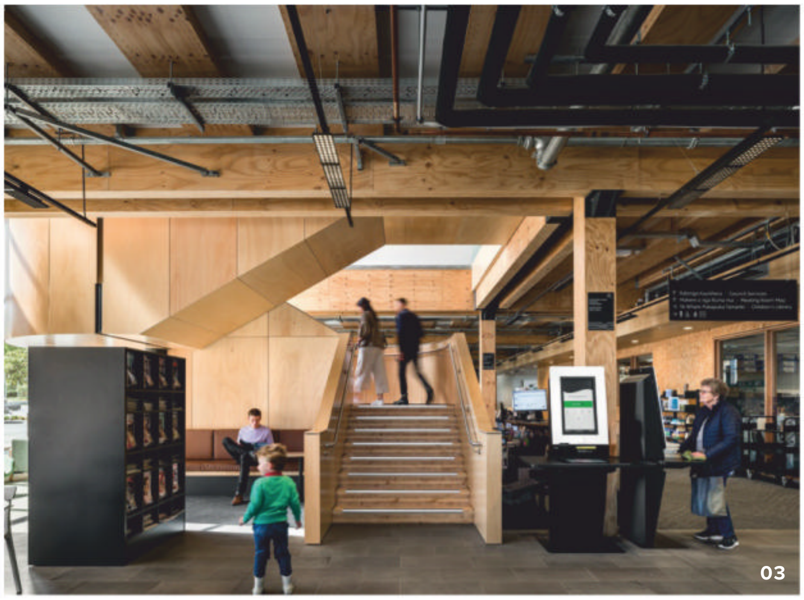


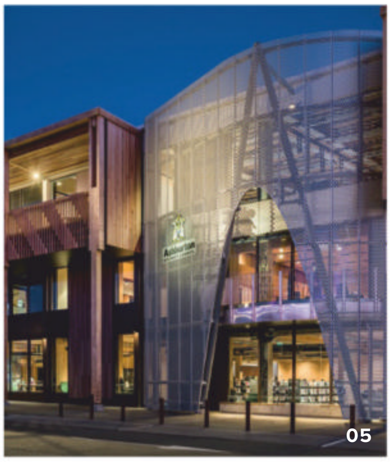
02

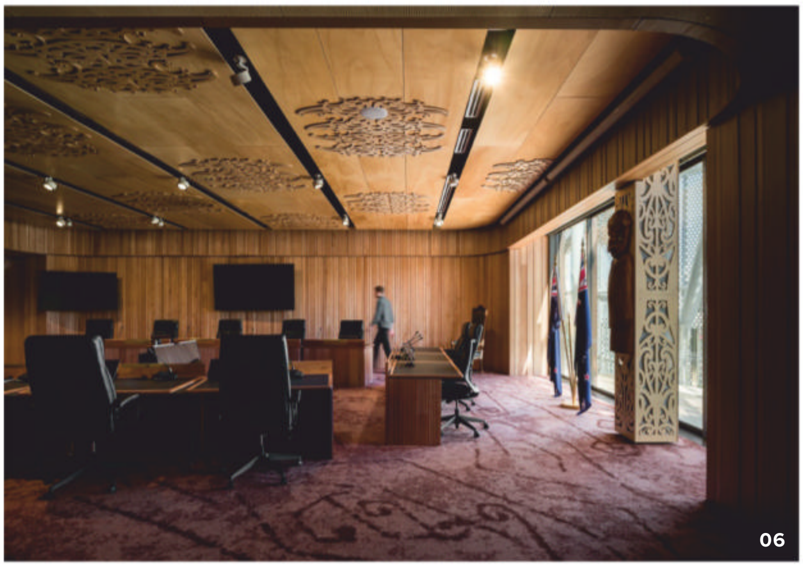
01 The café entry sparks activity from its location on the Baring Square and Havelock Street corner.

02 Baring Square can be seen from Ashburton Council's reception and administration.

03 Stairs lead from the main library facilities to additional collection spaces and the learning lab.







04 The stunning views are appreciated from the level-two verandah, which also acts as sun-shading for the glazing below.

05 The perforated stainless-steel screen marks the main entry and civic chamber with a playful allusion to 'A' for Ashburton and agricultural silos.

06 The interior surfaces of the civic chamber weave together carpeted local geographic references with carved rich native timbers.

key moves to resolve this challenge. The three-storey timber structure is shaped in an 'L', forming a courtyard space. The emergency operations centre (EOC) for the district, also included in the brief, was seismically separated to meet IL4 (Importance Level 4) requirements cost-effectively.

The ground floor is the 'activator': home to the primary public functions, with the café on the corner. Multiple entries provide pathways inside, circulation loops within the ground plane masterfully weaving spaces across the 1.5m floor-level drop. The exception is the children's library (more on this later), with a single entry and exit for easy supervision, tucked into the end of the ground-floor arm. The Council's office on the top floor takes advantage of the views, with a clerestory window letting additional light into the generous open-plan office. Here, members of the staff invited the adjustment from their previous closed-cell arrangements, enjoying increased levels of interaction within their teams.

The civic chamber could have been placed on the top floor; however, it has deliberately been placed mid-level so that councillors descend from the office to the democratic space. In this position, the civic chamber maintains a balance of accessibility (visual and physical) and the privacy needed when the chamber is in action. Externally, a perforated, curved, stainless-steel screen makes it legible from the street, a playful reference to agricultural silos and also forming an 'A' for Ashburton. While distinct local features are woven throughout the building, this is a room with significant mana. Internally, the chamber has been dressed in rich native timber, with carvings by Robinson on the ceilings and columns. Custom broadloom carpets reference local mountains, waterways and fault lines, continuing the thread of cultural narrative from Baring Square. Used just 20 to 30 per cent of the year, the chamber was designed to interface with the library for future public events. The possibility of inviting the public into the heart of the building is a refreshing gesture – this council is willing to welcome its people.

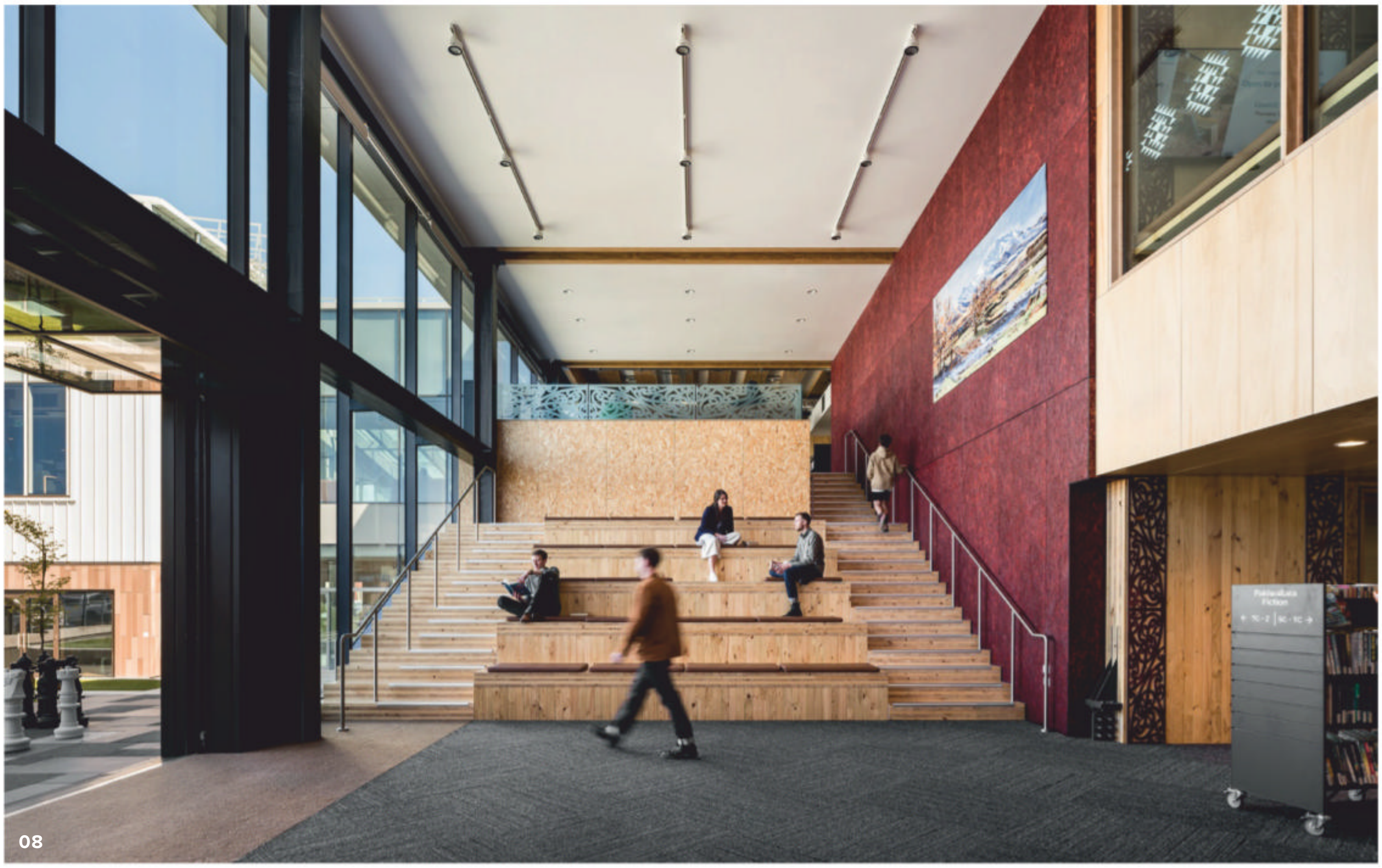
At over 6000m^2 and three storeys, the building's mass had the potential to overwhelm the settlement but careful treatment of the building's façade, utilising timber posts to create a colonnade, softens its bulk. This is a gesture to its finer-grain streetscape and references the former County Building that once occupied the site. The stunning views – such as the vista of the Southern Alps – have been prioritised over energy-efficient, finely-tuned glazing. However, the colonnade facilitates a verandah, also acting as passive shading for the floor-to-ceiling windows. Cladding of earthy-red-toned, glass-reinforced concrete panels allude to the 100-year-old brick (recently strengthened) Methodist church bounding its northern side, and Pioneer Hall, housed within.

Pioneer Hall, situated within the site, was retained for its heritage value. A humble 1916 single-storey brick building, it was previously used for a variety of public functions, including Birthright (an organisation specialising in the support of single-parent whānau) and Ashburton's first museum. It was something of a challenging obstacle to circulation until, finally, a delightful solution was come upon: to embrace the structure completely. Now, the hall is preserved,

07

07 The playground, located in the shelter of the building's form.

08 A multi-functional event space features a 'learning' stair, which connects the ground and first floors.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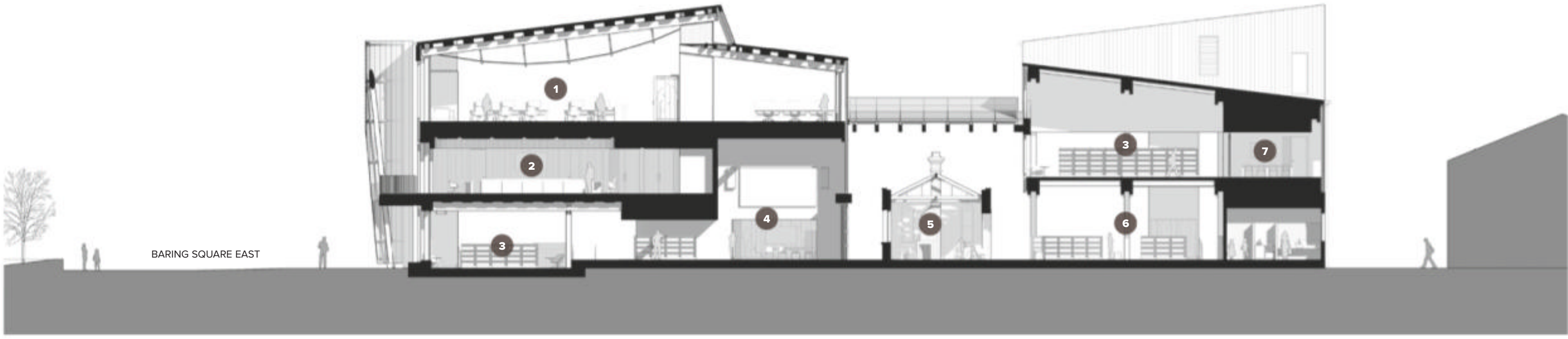


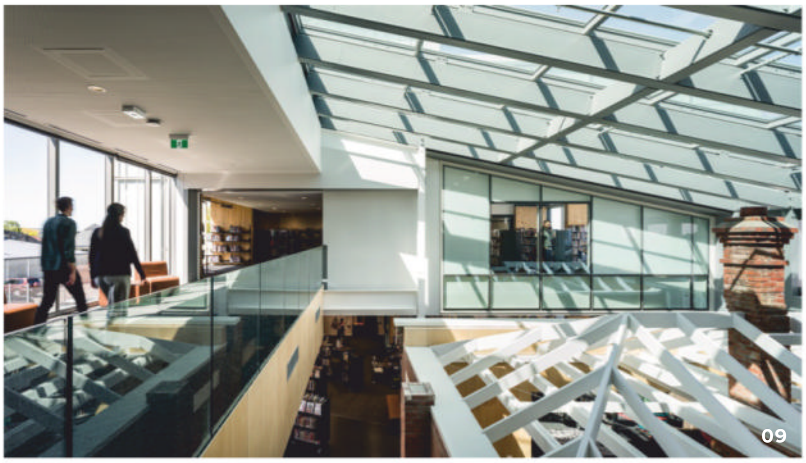
LONG SECTION

1 WORKSPACE **2** CIVIC CHAMBER **3** LIBRARY **4** EVENT SPACE **5** PIONEER HALL **6** CHILDREN'S LIBRARY **7** LEARNING HUB encased by the larger envelope around it. Even the crookedness of the chimney as it meets the fireplace has been kept: a quirk celebrated. The hall's trusses are open to the first floor above, with sight lines in and through pleasing and creating rich interaction between spaces (such as paper plane competitions from the above bridge). The hall's adapted purpose forms a memorable centre for the children's library, its scale and warmth making small humans feel at home. A landscaped playground is adjacent, in the sheltered courtyard, catering further for littlies with a safe space for running wild and letting out pent-up energy.

The decision to use mass timber construction was also made after feedback from the public, and is a core component of the sustainability strategy, minimising the facility's carbon footprint. Structural timber and services are largely exposed across the spaces, with innovative two- to three-metre-long cross-laminated timber (CLT) rocking walls utilised for gravity and lateral loads, and proprietary Potius plywood box beams used as the primary floor and ceilings. Artesian source heat pumping for heating and cooling has also been utilised to lower environmental impact, with all extracted water discharged back to the aquifer. Additionally, water is captured by the roof to be used for landscape irrigation, garden and a green wall which is part of the building's footprint. Pipes and ducting are exposed as is most of the structure, alluding to Ashburton's agricultural roots and showcasing the initiatives towards future resilience.

Constructed between 2021 and early 2024, the project faced pandemic delays, the consequential supply-chain shortage (at one stage, the custom steel bars needed for the CLT rocking walls were stuck on a ship on the Suez Canal) and material price increases (and the following inevitable value engineering). Throw in high winds that ripped off temporary protection and a couple of floods – the build weathered storms, literal and figurative. Its success is in the collective and brave vision of a diverse bunch of people – the Council as client with a truly collaborative approach – and its trust in the design team to lead them on the journey.

As we leave, a couple of farmers rock up in singlets and stubbies, the café is humming and families mill about the library. One can imagine hearing the click of knitting needles in the makers' space and the Centennial county clock tower chime. Te Whare Whakatere is distinctly of its place, reflective of its people and open to its future. In a world questioning democracy, Ashburton's civic heart is beating well. It has embraced its citizens, quirks and all.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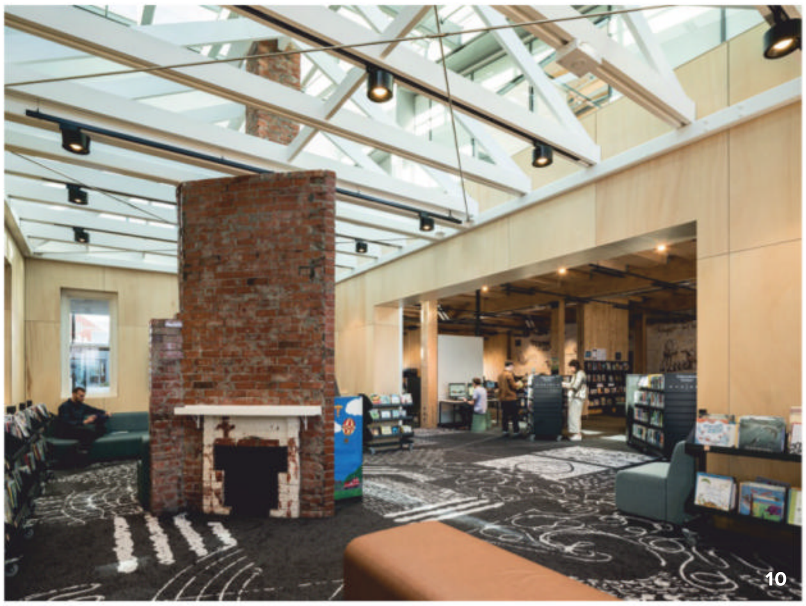
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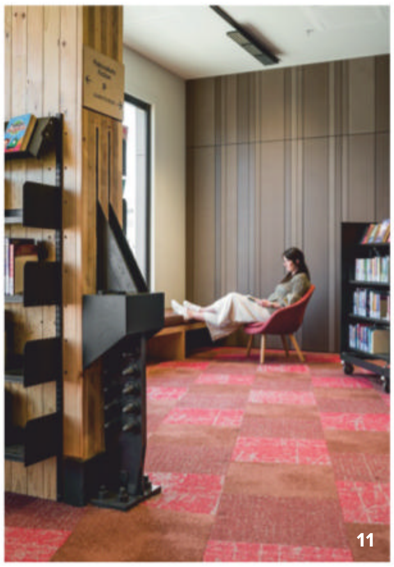
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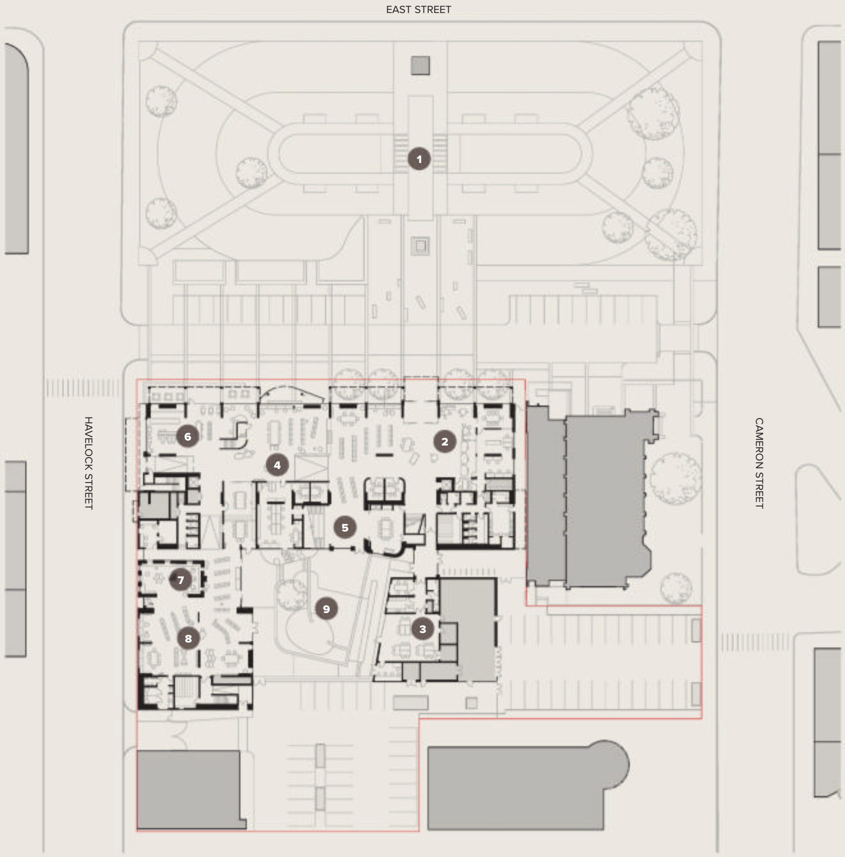
12

09 Circulation creates an opportunity to connect visually to the retained Pioneer Hall below.

10 Within Pioneer Hall is the memorable centre of the children's library.

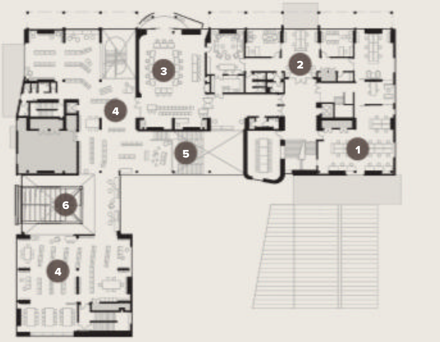
11 Detail of a CLT rocking wall foregrounds a quiet nook in the library.

12 Booth spaces balance collaboration and privacy in the Council's open-plan office.



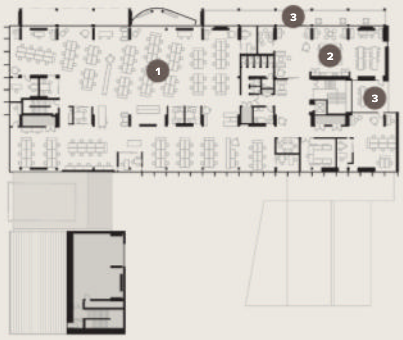
GROUND-FLOOR AND SITE PLAN

1 BARING SQUARE
2 CUSTOMER SERVICES
3 EOC
4 LIBRARY
5 EVENT SPACE
6 CAFÉ
7 PIONEER HALL
8 CHILDREN'S LIBRARY
9 COURTYARD



LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN

1 WORKSPACE
2 GOVERNANCE WORKSPACE
3 CIVIC CHAMBER
4 LIBRARY
5 EVENT SPACE
6 PIONEER HALL ATRIUM



LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN

1 WORKSPACE
2 STAFF KITCHEN
3 BALCONY

Project Information

LOCATION
221 Baring Square East, Ashburton
SITE SIZE 5850m^2
FLOOR AREA 6112m^2
STOREYS Three
TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation: 24 months
Construction: 33 months
CLIENT Ashburton District Council
ARCHITECT Athfield Architects
PROJECT TEAM Trevor Watt, Jon Rennie, Sophie Vial, Fraser Shields, Frances Cooper, Nich Faith, Alex Furniss, Alice Dwyer, Charles Collins, Elise Walding, Francis (Jared) Hubbard, Hollie Norman, Jaden Cairncross, Jamie Smyth, Kim Salt, Martijn van der Tol, Max Rodhouse, Michelle Hall, Miriam Barnett, Nalani Gloor, Nina Lowe, Polly Dawes, Sarah Davie, Simon Wilson, Stephen Brennan
BUILDER Naylor Love
INTERIORS Athfield Architects
STRUCTURAL AND SERVICES ENGINEER Beca
LANDSCAPE
RMM Landscape Architects
LIGHTING AND FIRE CONSULTANT Beca
QUANTITY SURVEYOR AECOM
GEOTECHNICAL AND PLANNING CONSULTANT GHD
ACOUSTICS
Acoustic Engineering Services
PROJECT MANAGER Logic Group
LIBRARY CONSULTANT
Sue Sutherland Consulting
CULTURAL DESIGN PARTNERS
Arowhenua, Fayne Robinson, Art Fetiche
PLYWOOD BOX BEAMS Potius
CLT STRUCTURE XLAM
SEISMIC ATTENUATORS Tectonus
WINDOWS/CURTAINWALL
Thermosash
ROOFING RoofLogic
CLADDING
Roofing Industries, Hermpac, Rieder
AUTOMATIC DOORS Dormakaba
WALL PANELS Kingspan, CS Roofing
INTERIOR TIMBER
Big River Panels, Timberline
FLOORING Heritage Carpets, Interface, Timaru Bluestone
JOINERY JB Joinery
INTERNAL PARTITIONS
Potter Interior Systems
LIGHTING ERCO
ACOUSTIC PANELS/DOORS
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DOORS Pacific Doors
HARDWARE James Bull
LIFT Schindler
ELECTRICAL Caldwell Levesque
PERFORATED PLASTERBOARD
Knauf Solopanel
SIGNAGE Signtech
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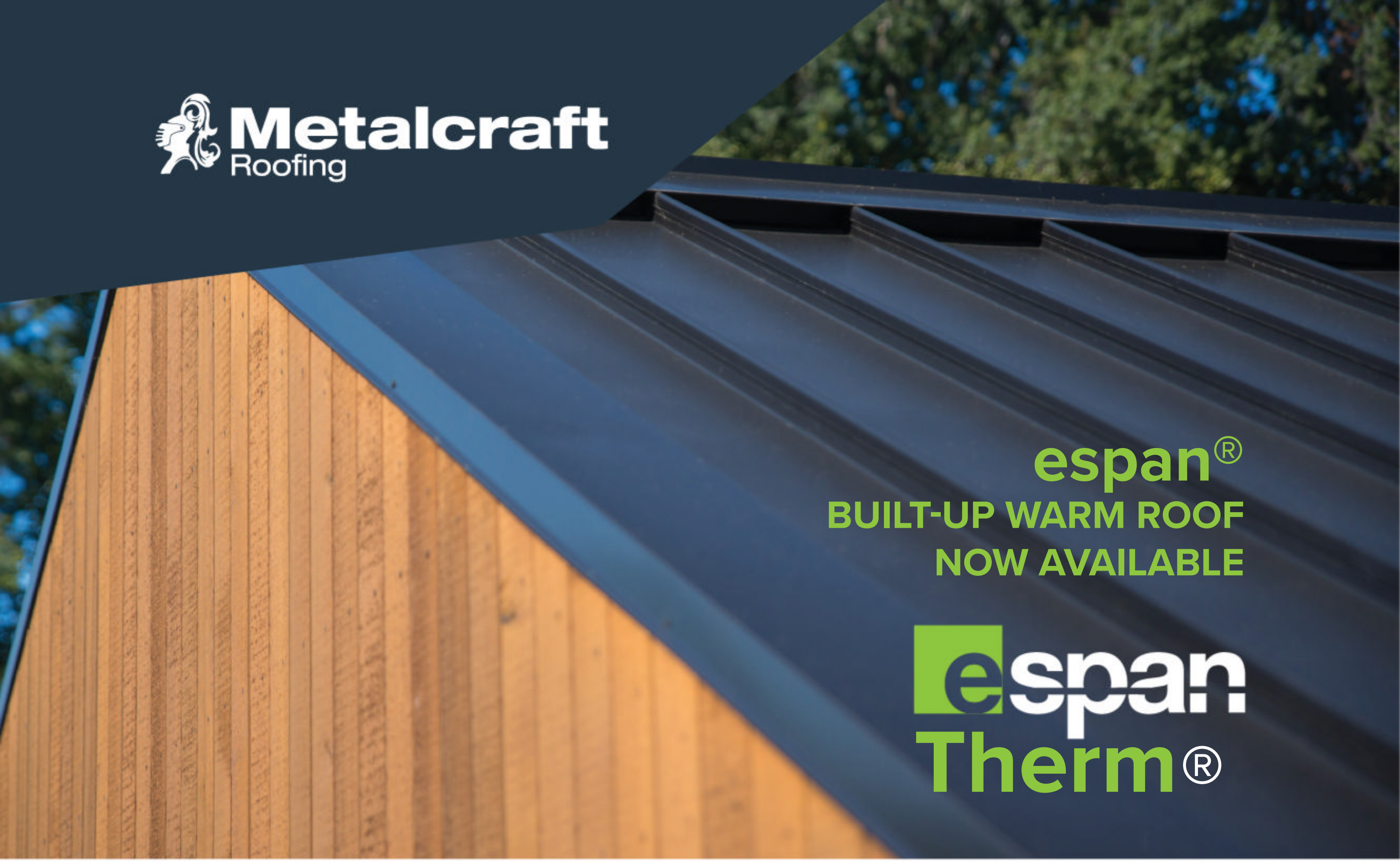
Metalcraft Roofing



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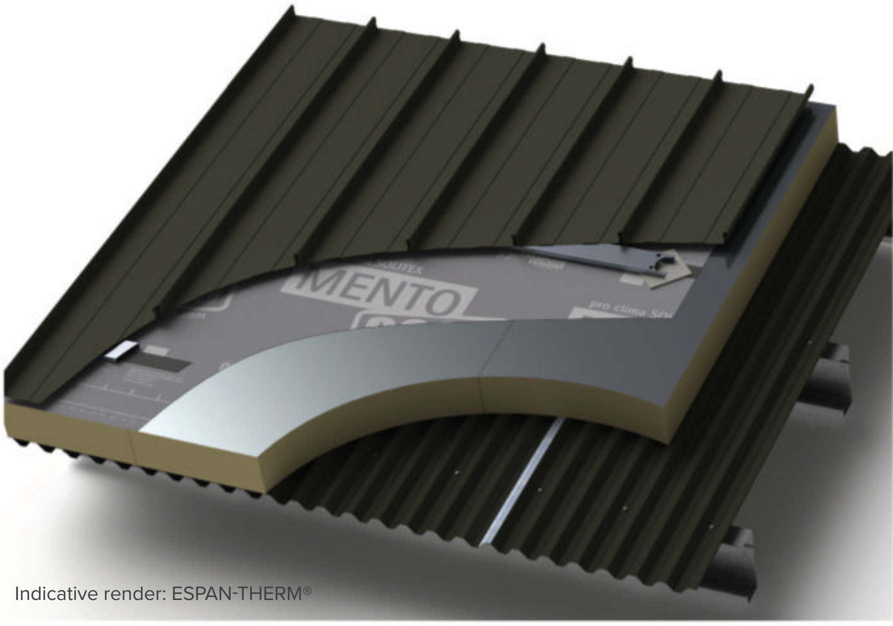

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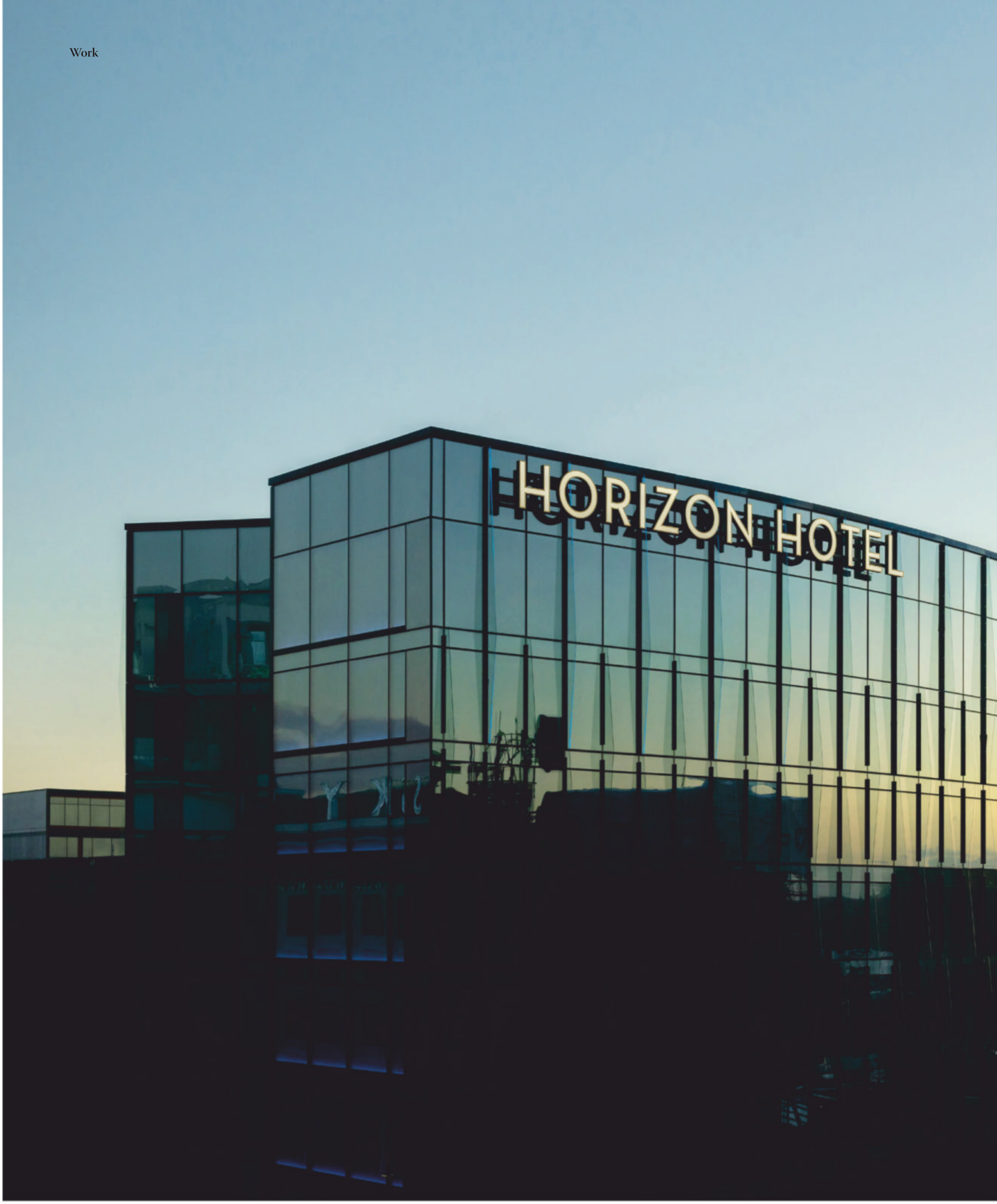
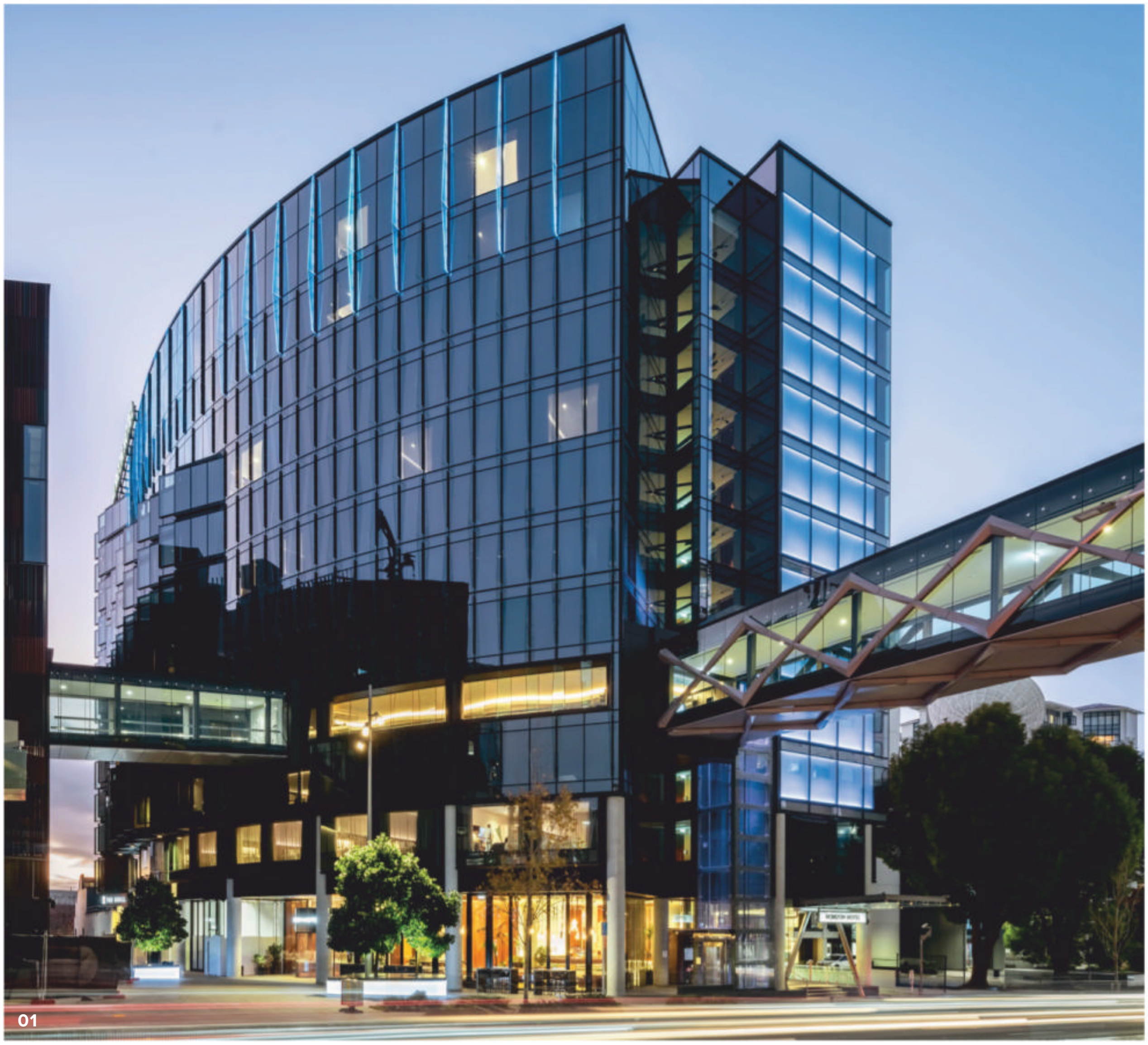

HORIZON HOTEL

Unfolding treasure boxes

Bill McKay goes inside the crafted luxury of **Horizon by SkyCity**, by **Moller Architects** in association with **Warren and Mahoney**.

Photography
SAM HARTNETT

LEFT The northern, harbour-facing façade of Horizon by SkyCity is seen from the SkyCity complex across the road. Image: Horizon by SkyCity.

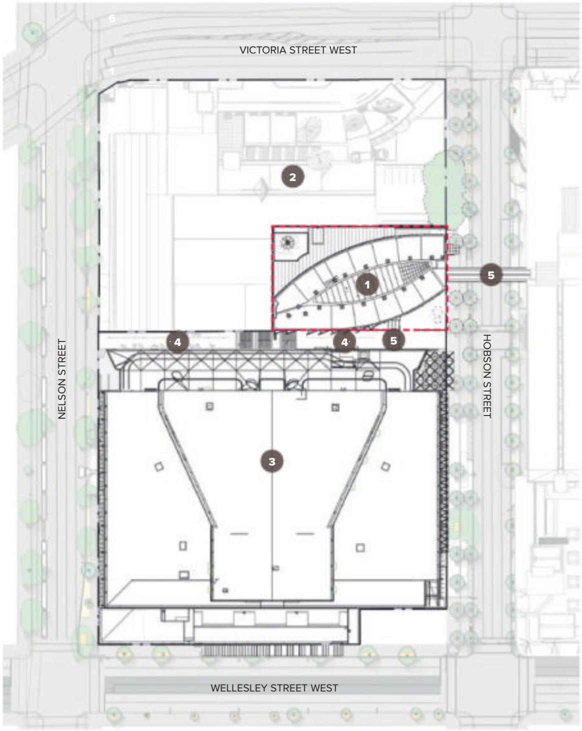


01 The hotel is seen from Hobson Street with the International Conference Centre to the left and an umbilical air bridge connection to SkyCity at the right.

THIS BUILDING LOOKS SO SIMPLE FROM THE street: a hotel is a lobby, maybe a restaurant and kitchen, definitely some back-of-house stuff and then a simple stack of rooms, right? This one has a nice elliptical plan, that's a gesture dreamed up by the architect, right? Wrong. Life and the architecture that wraps itself around our lives and diverse needs and complicated relationships is more... complicated, of course. Having a lovely day, we are enjoined by our baristas as we slope out the door in the morning, but night is a different story, after navigating everything chucked at us all day long. Home is one thing, a comfortable cave if we are lucky, but a good hotel aspires to, and promises, more. As fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg puts it, "When you get into a hotel room, you lock the door, and you know there is a secrecy, there is a luxury, there is fantasy. There is comfort. There is reassurance."

From Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to today's *The White Lotus*, travellers have made good drama and a good hotel's job is to smooth it all over and allow us to experience, briefly, the fantasy that life can be nice. And elegant and effortless as well, if we can afford it. For a brief period, we can be swan-like, despite our own turmoil and tribulations, as well as, no doubt, furious behind-the-scenes and below-stairs effort by our temporary servants.

Auckland's new Horizon Hotel (aka Horizon by SkyCity) is what it says on the label(s): a new hotel that's part of the SkyCity empire, which extends across quite a few city blocks now. At the centre of this, of course, is the Sky Tower and the massive block-long building encompassing the dark heart of the casino, with its first hotel above and a huge underground car park below. Its size is tempered to the east by the smaller scale of Federal Street's shared space lined with eateries and the SkyCity Grand Hotel, the complex's second. To the west, however, Hobson Steet is a different story: a one-way multi-lane traffic corridor that's essentially a motorway on-ramp. SkyCity's



SITE PLAN

1 HORIZON BY SKYCITY **2** TVNZ **3** NZICC **4** LANEWAY **5** AIR BRIDGE

third hotel is positioned across the default-highway and connected by a pedestrian bridge. The huge hull of that great behemoth, the new New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC for short, thanks), is to the south of the hotel and TVNZ (not affiliated to SkyCity, yet) is to the north. Horizon isn't so much sandwiched between all this; it's positioned to be a hinge between SkyCity and the NZICC, with links via two air bridges and a new laneway connecting Hobson Street to Nelson Street. Moller Architects and Warren and Mahoney collaborated on Horizon with Mollers being the design lead. "Collaborations can be fraught," says Gordon Moller, "but this went very well", Mollers having a team in the Warren and Mahoney office.

The site allocated for Horizon is actually square, but a corner was significantly clipped by a microwave path from TVNZ's roof to a Waitākere Ranges transponder. A volcanic sight line was also an invisible intrusion on the site. These circumstances prompted a curved form on the TVNZ side of the site and reflecting that shape on the south side resulted in an overall elliptical building plan with services, vertical circulation and an atrium in the centre. The arc of the northern curve also serendipitously allowed an extra two harbour-view rooms to fit into that segment and, on the southern side, the curl to Hobson Street allows the laneway to open more invitingly to the street.

02

03

04

02 The car and coach arrival area is under an artificial sky, two floors below Hobson Street.

03 The reception area has a finely curved marble counter.

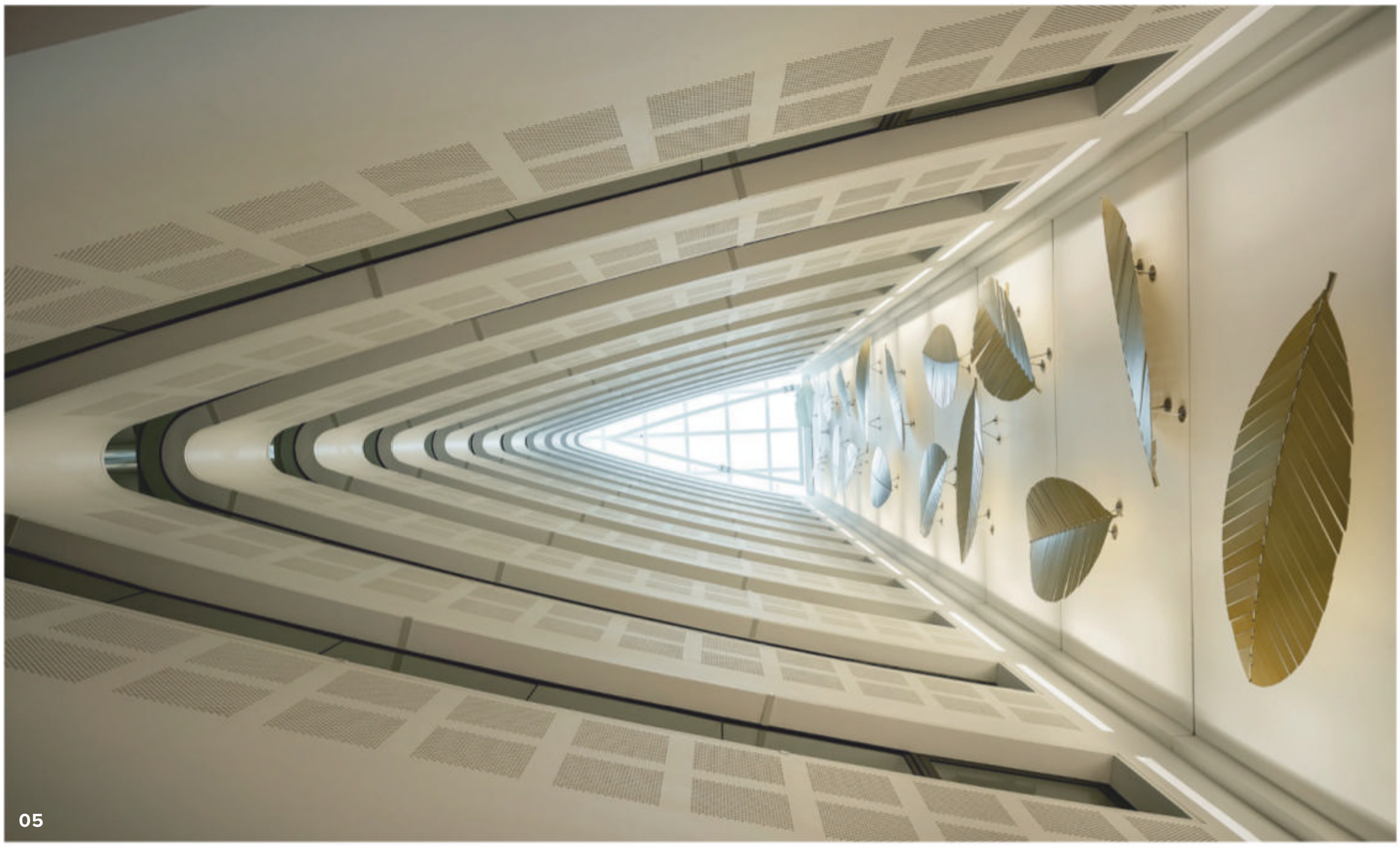
04 The restaurant on ground level has a courtyard behind.

Let's leave Hobson Street and go inside Horizon. The porte-cochère is less expansive than you'd like it to be when dropped off on a rainy Auckland day, thanks to the city's council. I don't know why. Hobson Street needs all the help it can get until sense prevails and it becomes a quieter two-way boulevard once again, focused on accommodating more people than just those in cars hell-bent for the highway. The big surprise for those who will arrive at Horizon by car is that most won't come this way; there is a second way in by car or coach via Nelson Street under the NZICC. The two structures have co-located a lot of building services and there is also a massive area here devoted to shunting punters in and out of both buildings; your carriage can convey you about a block underground to the base of the hotel where you will pull up under a large canopy. Actually, it's an artificially lit ceiling but it gives a very good impression of daylight to anyone 'fresh' off an airliner. An entry, a plush little foyer and up the lifts and you're in the Hobson Street ground-floor entry area: reception, lobby, restaurant, bars, all opening out one way or another. A courtyard, a bay off the street at the mouth of the laneway and the laneway itself, once the NZICC is finished, should be activated by a couple of little shops, and movement to and from the hotel, and those short-cutting from Nelson Street to Hobson in a welcome laneway away from torrents of traffic.

Horizon is a five-star hotel: New Zealand not international. I don't know what the difference is but it is pretty lovely here with some gorgeous finishes; Moller especially mentioned the great suppliers and subbies on the project. The atrium is not as big as you may think but it soars vertically like a big tree in a small clearing in a forest, accentuated by a beautiful artwork of abstracted pōhutukawa leaves articulated in anodised aluminium. On the hotel levels, the elliptical nature of the plan means the corridors are single-loaded rather than double but I like that and the gloomy, forest-like lighting. The place is quieter, less busy, and each door is recessed back from the hallway, a few panels of timber shaping a tiny private alcove: a bubble of anticipation before entering your room. Von Furstenberg would like it and here is something she would love: the rooms themselves. The concept here was of a portmanteau or steamer trunk: that gigantic unfolding manifold house-in-a-suitcase that a 19th-century traveller would have staff cart around after them on tours of the Continent and elsewhere. It would magically appear in their room, as big as a wardrobe: a wunderkammer of their stuff in a foreign place.

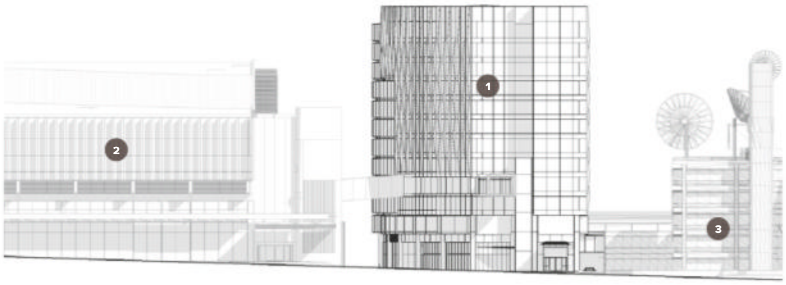
Horizon's northern segment has expansive views to the harbour over the top of TVNZ and these sea-view rooms have fine little fins articulating the façade,

05 The atrium, embellished with an artwork of pōhutukawa leaves, rises like a tree in a small forest clearing.


05

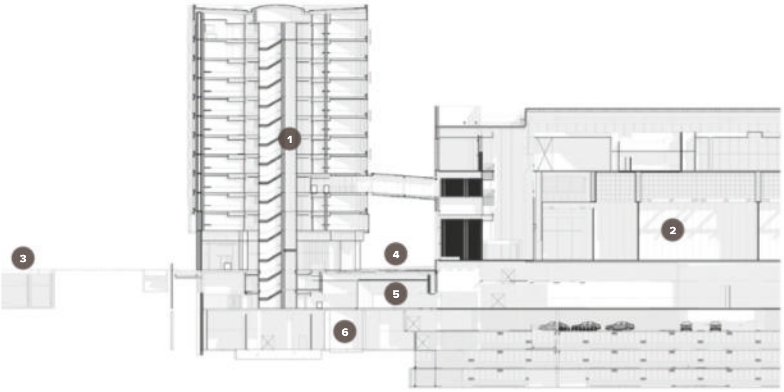
a conscious reference to shellfish prompted by the elliptical plan tending towards an internal spiral. These fins are much more overt in the southern quarter, with what Moller calls 'guards van windows' after the rear carriage on a train, channelling your vision in a certain direction: in this case, to the west. No offence, NZICC, but that's one big roof you have there and I'd rather avert my gaze to the distant green Waitākeres. There are 300ish guest rooms here and they come in a few different types, with interconnecting doors in some to allow suites or caregivers to have rooms next to accessible ones.

I have a side-hustle as a speaker on cruise ships, mostly six-star, and these rooms impressed me. They go well beyond the usual generic attention to detail and have lots of interesting, quirky-but-well-thought-out details, such as a hatch you can open in a bathroom to gaze at the view while brushing your teeth. It is not often a final design meets the expectations set by the concept, but these little rooms really are like treasure boxes with unfolding features, drawers, trays and so on for von Furstenberg's bits and pieces and must-haves, as well as providing mise en scène for whatever else she had in mind that we could intuit from her list. Horizon is simple on the outside but it's a simplicity that masks great complexity, like any good hotel or a nice oyster does. ⓐ



EAST ELEVATION

1 HORIZON BY SKYCITY **2** NZICC **3** TVNZ



CROSS-SECTION

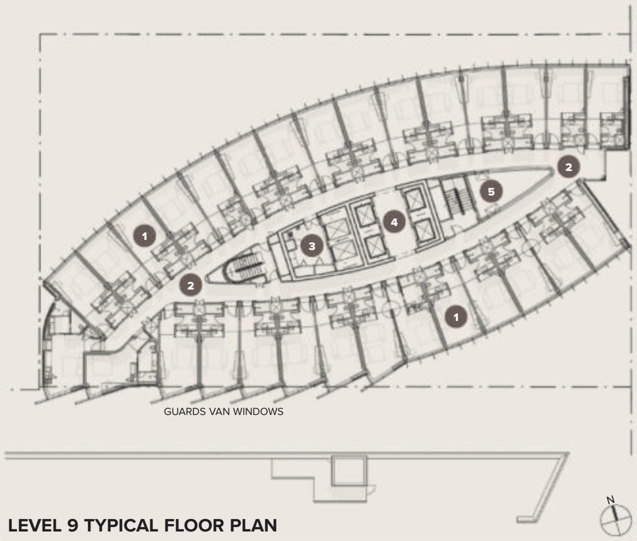
1 HORIZON BY SKYCITY **2** NZICC **3** TVNZ **4** LANEWAY **5** VEHICLE ENTRY **6** PLANT

06

07

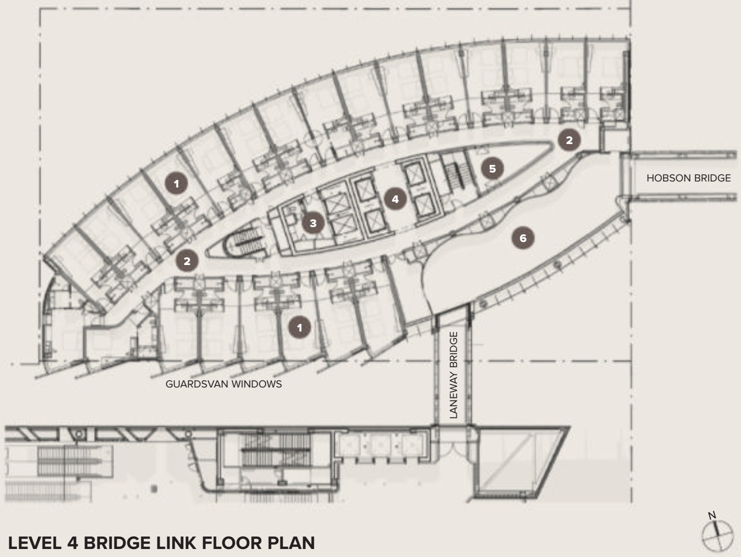
06 Restaurant seating adjoins the main foyer.

07 Intricate detailing and quality materials are seen in the guest rooms.



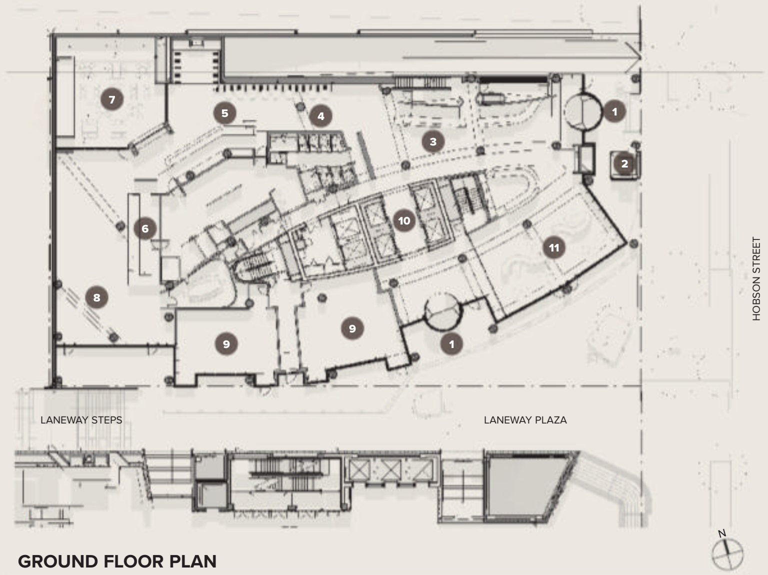
LEVEL 9 TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

1 GUEST ROOMS **2** CORRIDOR **3** BACK OF HOUSE **4** LIFTS **5** ATRIUM



LEVEL 4 BRIDGE LINK FLOOR PLAN

1 GUEST ROOMS **2** CORRIDOR **3** BOH **4** LIFTS **5** ATRIUM **6** PROMENADE



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1 ENTRY
2 PUBLIC LIFT
3 RECEPTION
4 AMENITIES
5 BAR
6 KITCHEN
7 EXTERNAL COURTYARD
8 RESTAURANT
9 FOOD AND BEVERAGE
10 LIFTS
11 LOUNGE BAR

Project Information

LOCATION 85 Hobson Street, Auckland
SITE SIZE 2092m^2
FLOOR AREA 20,928m^2
STOREYS 12
COMPLETION DATE 2024
CLIENT SkyCity Entertainment Group
ARCHITECT Moller Architects in association with Warren and Mahoney
PROJECT TEAM **Moller Architects:** Gordon Moller, Craig Moller, Michael Von Collas, Terry St George, Jodie Moller, Jake Tindall, Joyce Dobbs, Michelle Chang **Warren and Mahoney:** John Coop, Andrew Tu'inukuafe, Richard Archbold, Richard Voss, Dominic Plume, John McNamara, Steven Morgan
BUILDER Fletcher Construction
STRUCTURAL, HYDRAULIC, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEER Beca
LANDSCAPE Boffa Miskell
INTERIORS Moller Architects in association with Warren and Mahoney
INTERIOR FURNISHINGS Furnz Group
LIGHTING Lightworks
FAÇADE ENGINEER Mott MacDonald
QUANTITY SURVEYOR RLB
TRAFFIC CONSULTANT TPC
PLANNING CONSULTANT Barker & Associates
FIRE CONSULTANT NDY
ACOUSTICS Marshall Day Acoustics
PROJECT MANAGER Beca
ROOF Equus Industries
FAÇADE Wight Aluminium
ALUMINIUM CLADDING Symonite
STEEL WINDOWS AND DOORS Adams Steelguard
ACOUSTIC CEILING PANELS Asona, Autex Acoustics
INTERIOR PANELS New Zealand Panels Group
FLOORING Forbo
TILING Italian Stone
CUSTOM CARPETS ECC, SF Design
ENTRY MATS Advance Flooring
REVOLVING DOORS Assa Abloy
PAINT FINISHES Resene

NEW HORIZONS

Project: Horizon Hotel, Auckland **Lighting Design:** Light Works + Beca **Architect:** Moller Architects + Warren and Mahoney **Photography:** Jono Parker

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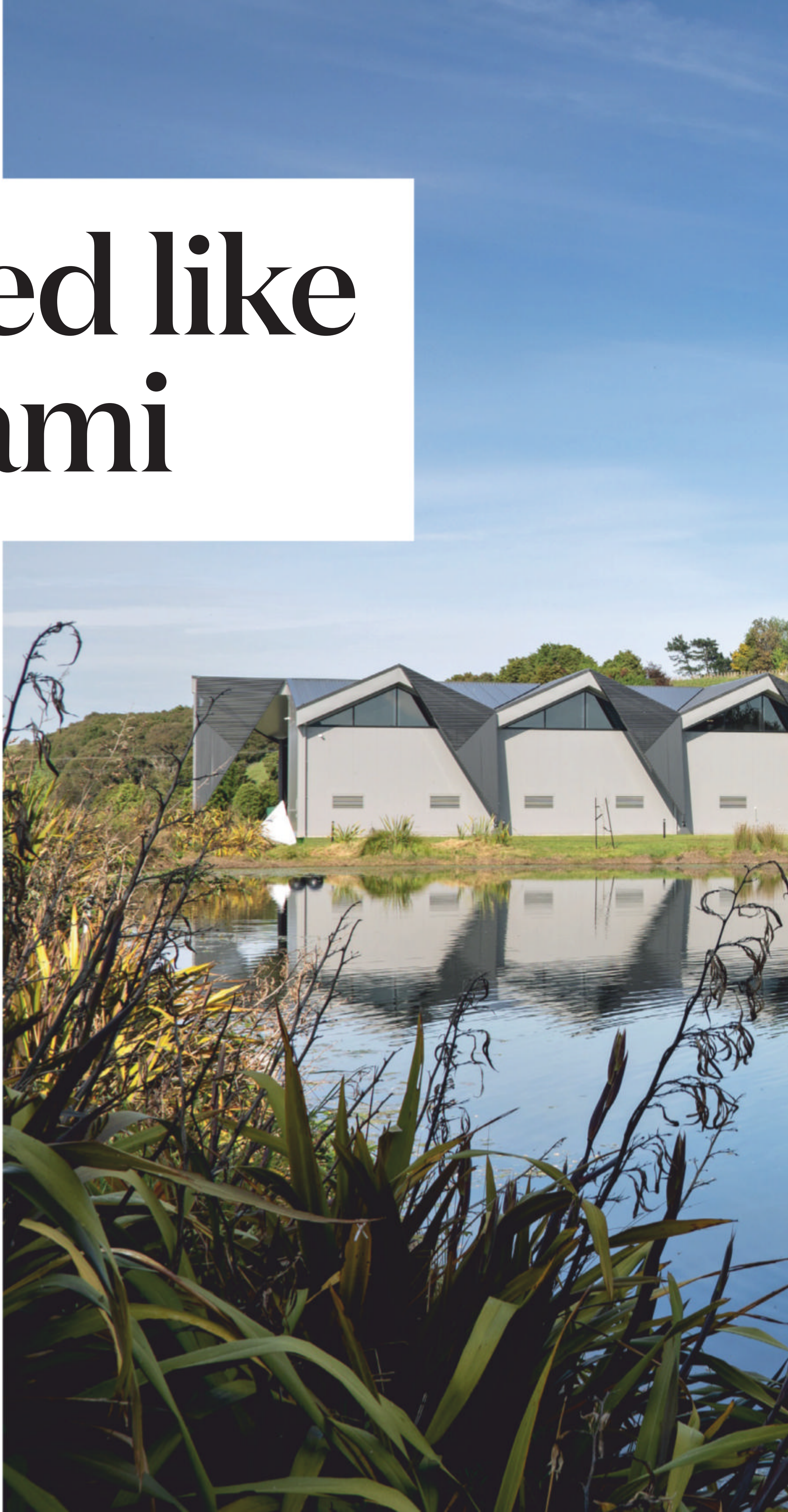
KKDC
NEW ZEALAND

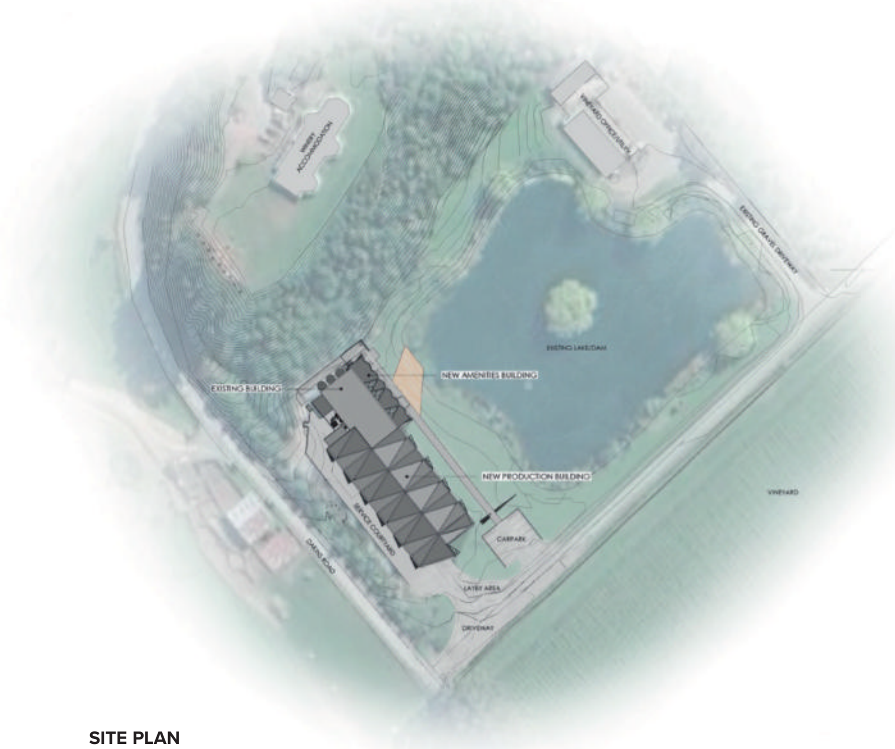
Folded like origami

Guy Marriage samples both the architecture and the product offerings at **DLA Architects' Urlar** winery redevelopment in the Wairarapa's vineyard region.

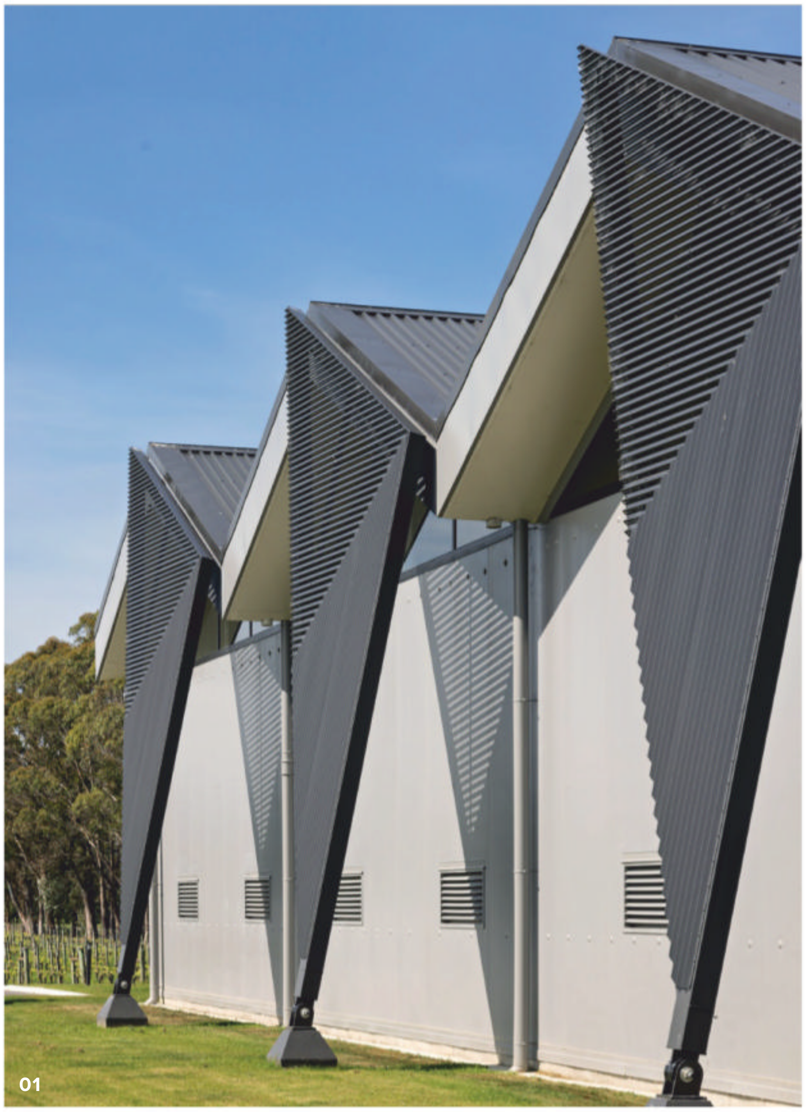
Photography
PAUL MCCREDIE



RIGHT Urlar winery shimmers across a frost-fighting reservoir, which should, surely, be named Lake Urlar.



SITE PLAN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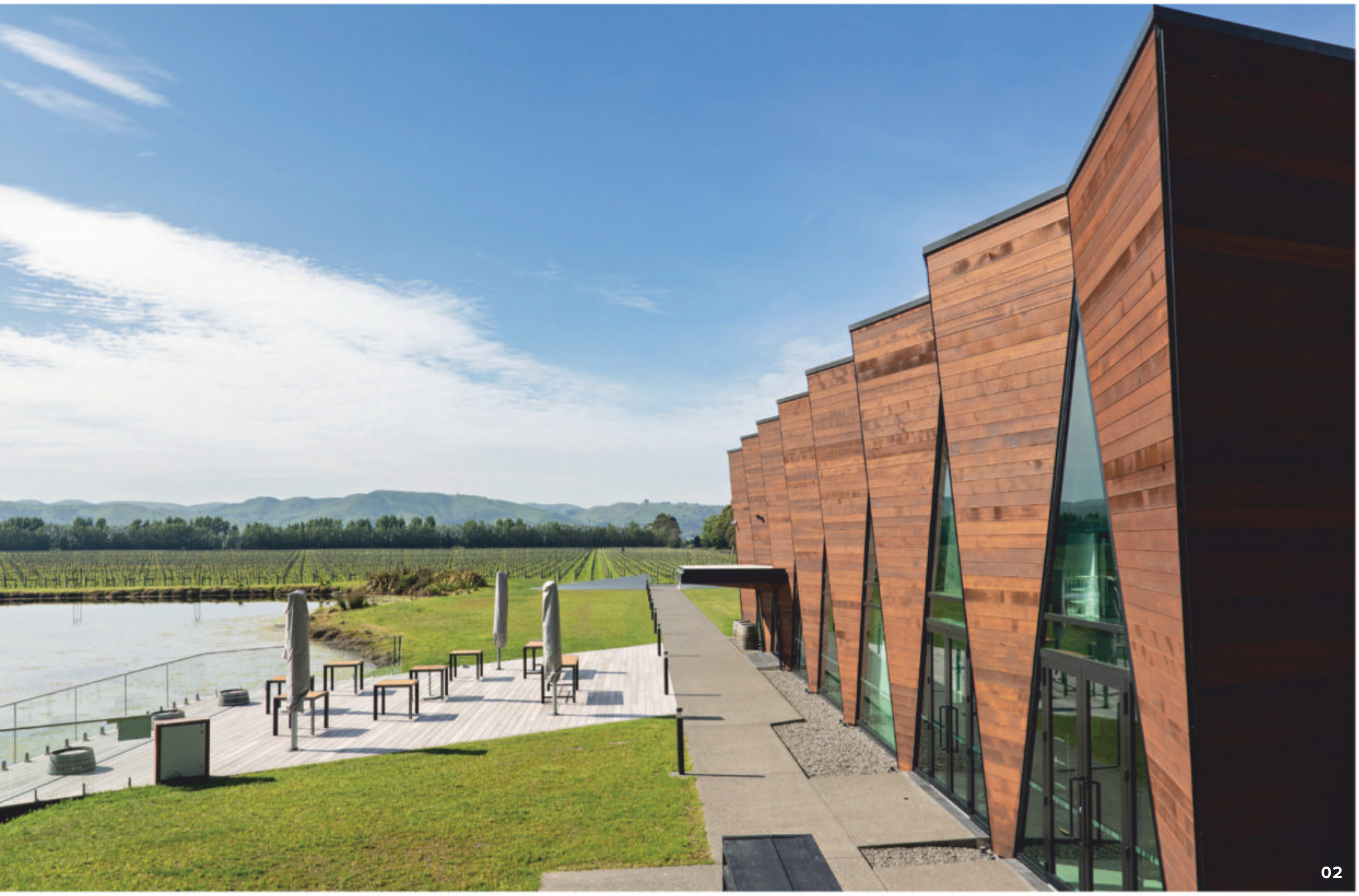
AOTEAROA'S WINE-PRODUCING CAPABILITIES have improved greatly over the last 50 years, as has the wine, thank goodness. Our best wines now regularly beat the Old World wines in international competitions – and some French wineries now employ New Zealand winemakers to enable them to catch a bit of the old Kiwi black magic. The grape varieties are now far better suited to the terroir of the earth, the grapes are mechanically harvested, the frosts can generally be averted via cunning technology, and screw tops have fully replaced corks. Oh, how things have changed – and all for the better!

Wineries in this country have varied from the simple classic barn (Clearview's old tractor shed), to the extravagant Elephant Hill (vast and copper-clad), the elegant Peregrine (one wing, going fast while standing still) and the Aldo Rossi-esque PoMo masterpiece of Craggy Range. Some have cost many thousands, others have been several millions. The difference in scale and extravagance is usually down to a massive influx of cash (typically foreign investment) but, usually, still involves local architects.

The latest incarnation of foreign largesse is the new Urlar winery crafted by DLA Architects, near Gladstone in the Wairarapa. Like all wineries, at its heart it is just a well-insulated big box, in which to receive the raw grapes and transform them over time into a delicious substance with just a pretentious hint of blackberries or a whiff of gooseberries and apricots. Needless to say, the wine at Urlar is delicious, but mainly exported so you may be unfamiliar with the brand. Ultimately owned by a mysterious Mr Nishi, owner of a revered ancient whisky distillery in Japan, the wine estate in this country is run by the indispensable winemaker Kohei Koyama and his wife, Kuniko.

Urlar (a Scottish Gaelic word meaning 'of the Earth') sits at the base of a slight hill, overlooking 31 hectares of organically grown grapes reaching across the valley floor to the Ruamahanga River. And, yes, it really is of the earth, as the Waiohine alluvium soil makes for excellent grape-growing conditions. Urlar has been around for more than 20 years, although the recent construction of the new facility has trebled the capacity of the winery and changed the tempo considerably; this is now a big export business. Urlar has a beautiful man-made lake by the winery, which keeps the ducks and swallows happy with midges and tadpoles to munch on but, also, doubles as a reservoir for spraying mist around in case of frost (the grape-grower's nightmare).

The winery itself consists primarily of a large rectangular shed, separated into two sides: red grapes vs white, pinot noir vs sauvignon blanc. In winemaking terms, it is a diagram of efficiency – grapes arrive at one end, are loaded into tanks for



crushing, and transferred to other tanks for cooling and settling. Eventually, the red wine reaches the stage of being put into barrels and then left for some time, depending on the grape and the quality of the harvest. The many oak barrels holding the pinot like to rest in darkness for a couple of years.

The big insulated box has been folded like origami, the roof and walls crinkled back and forth to create a giant triangulated treasure chest. The folded roof allows regular high-level clerestory windows to bring daylight into the tank room while, externally, triangular perforated metal sunshades connect the roof to the ground and ensure that no strong Wairarapa sunlight breaks through internally. Coolness is maintained by stringent attention from a control room, which is raised up above on a mezzanine floor and can monitor every corner of the winery. A 'monorail' suspended above provides the key – the overhead gantry enables the giant stainless-steel tanks to be lifted (when empty) and a giant metal agitator to be lifted up and plunged through the lid to stir up the fermenting grapes.

The barrel room contains the entombed remains of the original, much smaller winery, now eclipsed by the big brother. Amazingly, the winery had to keep producing throughout the build, while massive concrete pours and steel chassis was built all around. A faint smell of wine permeates the facilities, as it should at any good winery but, at this time of the year, harvest is over and the wine is already laid down, gently fermenting and bubbling away, improving year by year. The ground-floor kitchen facilities were incorporated late in the design stage, moving the venue from just offering wine tastings to its current incarnation as a slice of foodie paradise. Scrumptious dishes, such as brie baked in honey and walnuts, or sourdough topped with mushrooms and halloumi, make for good bedfellows with the delicious Urlar Rosé brut on offer. I'm in food and wine heaven. But I digress.

Overall, Urlar is an exercise in rigid triangular geometry: an interesting choice for a business which largely deals in things barrel shaped and bottle driven. The visitor facilities, traditionally known as the 'cellar door', are housed in an angular, double-level timber box on the north side, bathed in sunshine

01 Triangular perforated metal sunshades connect the roof to the ground.

02 The parade of cedar panels lines up across the lakefront.

URLA
CLAYSTONE

03

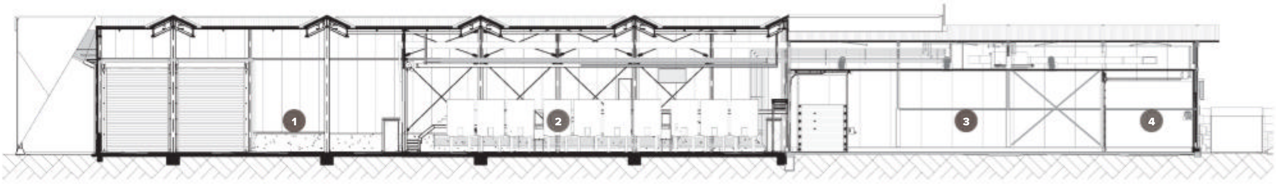
04

05

03 Entry to Urlar features a wall of smooth, fresh tōtara.

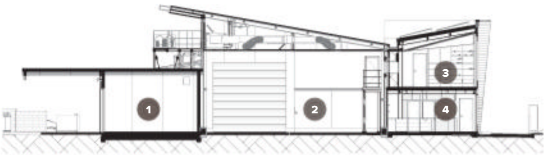
04 Climbing the stair allows a look back to the VIP area above.

05 Boardroom or tasting table, this space offers views out to the lake or inwards to the barrel room.



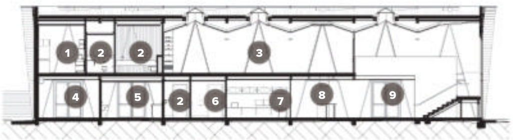
LONGITUDINAL SECTION THROUGH PRODUCTION

1 PRESS HALL **2** RED FERMENTATION **3** BARREL HALL **4** COLD STORAGE



AMENITIES AND BARREL HALL SECTION

1 CHILLER/FREEZER **2** BARREL HALL **3** VIP LOUNGE **4** TASTING



AMENITIES LONGITUDINAL SECTION

1 FIRST-FLOOR KITCHEN
2 WC
3 VIP LOUNGE
4 EXTERIOR STORAGE/UTILITY
5 GROUND-FLOOR KITCHEN
6 ACCESSIBLE WC
7 OFFICE
8 TASTING
9 ENTRY

by the lake. More origami: the frontage ripples a little, projecting in and out with a row of sculptural timber shields protecting a wall of tall triangular glass panels. Driven at least partially by Mr Nishi and his Japanese love of well-crafted timber geometry, the effect is striking externally, while fresh and sumptuous internally. The whole of this area is lit via a series of triangular skylights above, where the crispness of the triple-sided cavities capturing the blue Wairarapa sky is set off against the darker, more sombre depths of the fermenting barrel room behind.

The ambience internally has a high-end corporate feeling, with the triangular motif expressed once more in the walls, the roof and even the panels on the staircase balustrade. These have all been beautifully and impeccably finished by Rigg Zschokke builders. Inside, there is a mixture of timber – giant slabs of pine CLT while, upstairs, a beautiful giant board table made of New Zealand beech looks and feels divine. Keeping it company is a feature wall of gorgeous tōtara, harvested from farmed trees grown locally. Inside, I'm a bit torn by this as, to me, the tōtara is pleading to be let outside to brave the elements – Wairarapa used to be a giant tōtara forest in the days of the moa.

Here, the internal walls are completed in a silky-smooth Japanese plaster finish that simply begs to be stroked, while the timber work on the shelving is as well crafted as is any work by Kengo Kuma. Quality levels are incredibly high and credits really need to go to the whole team involved on this project, with Glenn, Ian and James from DLA, Silvester Clark on the complex structural steelwork, and the mechanical engineering by Jacksons Engineering. Rigg Zschokke has picked up its usual high quality of finish and has excelled on the whole package, already winning accolades at the Master Builders awards.

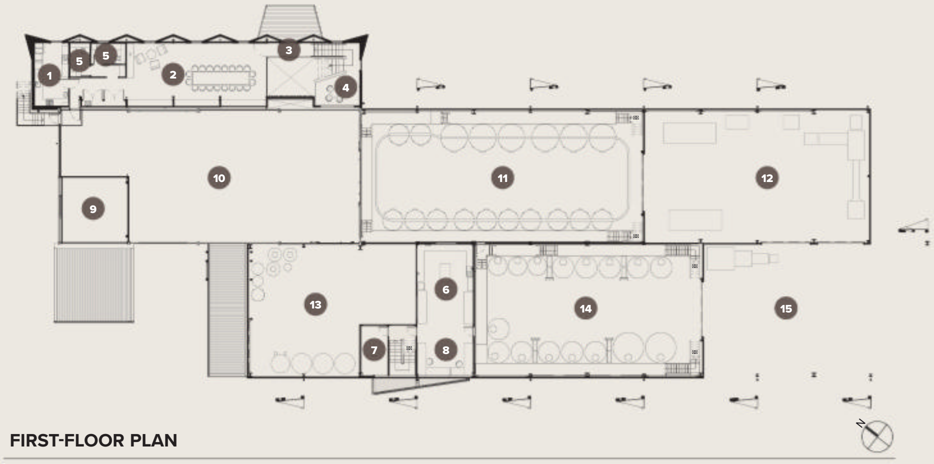
Overall, therefore, this new winery deserves its place on the list of great Aotearoa wine experiences, for the architecture as much as for the tasty food and gorgeous wine. It is a big step forward by DLA as well and really helps put Urlar firmly on the map as a place to visit.

06 Barrel room – shush! Wine sleeping…

07 Wake up fresh and fruity in the tank room, with a heavy crush on.

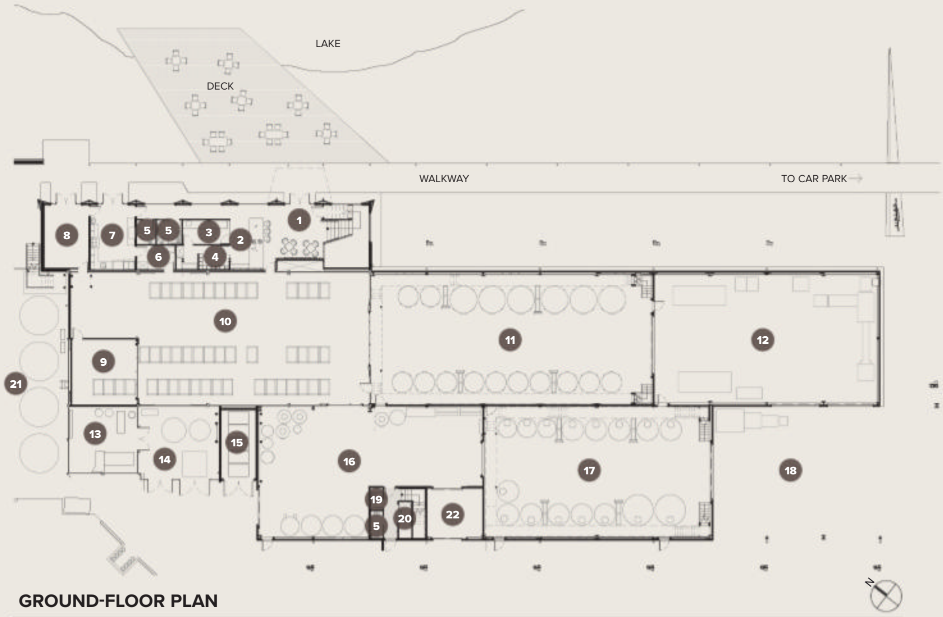
06

07



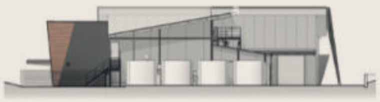
FIRST-FLOOR PLAN

1 FIRST-FLOOR KITCHEN
2 VIP LOUNGE
3 BRIDGE
4 LANDING
5 WC
6 WINEMAKERS' WORKSHOP
7 MEETING ROOM
8 OFFICE
9 COLD STORAGE
10 BARREL HALL
11 RED FERMENTATION
12 PRESS HALL
13 UTILITY HALL
14 WHITE FERMENTATION
15 LOADING/UNLOADING

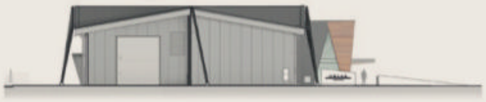


GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

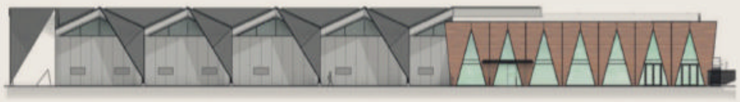
1 CELLAR DOOR ENTRY
2 TASTING
3 OFFICE
4 DISPLAY STORAGE
5 WC
6 STORAGE
7 GROUND-FLOOR KITCHEN
8 STORAGE/UTILITY
9 COLD STORAGE
10 BARREL HALL
11 RED FERMENTATION
12 PRESS HALL
13 PLANT ROOM
14 OUTDOOR PLANT AREA
15 CHILLER/FREEZER
16 UTILITY HALL
17 WHITE FERMENTATION
18 LOADING/UNLOADING
19 CLEANERS' CUPBOARD
20 COATS
21 RAINWATER HARVEST STORAGE TANKS
22 STORE



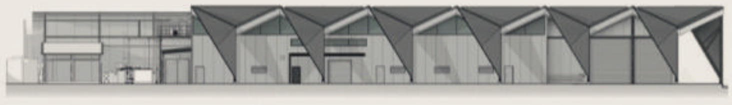
NORTH-WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH-EAST ELEVATION



NORTH-EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH-WEST ELEVATION

Project Information

LOCATION 140 Dakins Road, East Taratahi
SITE SIZE 23,434m²
FLOOR AREA 1760m²
STOREYS Two
TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation: 17 months
Construction: 34 months
CLIENT Urlar Gladstone
ARCHITECT DLA Architects
PROJECT TEAM Glenn Gardiner, Ian Helliwell, James Suter, Michelle Gilbert, Sanjeev Kumar, Alana Norris, Tegan Wardle
BUILDER Rigg Zschokke
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Silvester Clark
HYDRAULIC ENGINEER Flow Consulting
MECHANICAL ENGINEER Jacksons Engineering
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER Intellex
LANDSCAPES AND INTERIORS DLA Architects
LIGHTING Intellex
QUANTITY SURVEYOR Duffield Murray Consultants
SURVEYOR Tomlinson & Carruthers Surveyors
GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANT Tetra Tech Coffey
PLANNING CONSULTANT Kellow Environmental Planning
FIRE CONSULTANT Cognition
PROJECT MANAGER DLA Architects
STEEL FABRICATOR Progressive Engineering
ROOFING RoofLogic
CLADDING PANELS Bondor XFLAM
ALUMINIUM SUNSHADING FABRICATION Fielden Metalworks, Progressive Engineering, Rigg Zschokke
GLAZING APL, Wight Aluminium, Viridian Glass
STAIRCASE BALUSTRADE Fielden Metalworks panels
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GLADSTONE
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2 HOTEL LOBB
3 RESTAU ANT
4 RESTAURANT/B
5 FRONT KITCHEN
6 BACK KITCHEN
7 HOTEL FR T OFFICE
8 OFFICE LIF OBBY
9 OFFICE LO
CAFÉ
ETAIL
VOID
13 TERRACE
14 LOBBY
15 STAIRS
N

Portrait: Rachel Wybrow.

ANNABEL BERRY

As founder and creative director of **Annabel Berry Creative Co**, Annabel is passionate about breaking boundaries, bold ideas and a world of possibility.

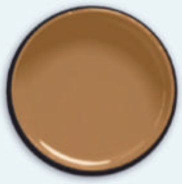
What led you to a career in interior design?
My journey was a natural evolution of my creative and corporate career. After working in marketing and events, I pivoted to interior design to extend my creativity and love of interiors. This personal passion soon turned into a thriving business, with early residential projects growing into large-scale commercial work and, ultimately, my own design retail store. About three years ago, I started specialising in commercial interior design and I now offer a multifaceted, end-to-end service that goes beyond interiors. My work spans brand development, visual identity, marketing strategy, social media, launch campaigns and interior design. It's a holistic approach, designed to help clients not only shape beautiful, intentional spaces but also successfully launch or relaunch their businesses with confidence and clarity.

Where do you draw your influence from?
My design process is deeply influenced by historical reference – how the past informs our present in a new, modern way. I take a site-specific approach to every project, always curious about the original intention of the building and what the architect was expressing. I see my role as collaborating with the building itself, honouring its heritage while breathing new life – finding balance between preservation and progression. The natural world is also an ongoing source of inspiration. Living in a landscape framed by valleys, mountains, farmland and sea means I am constantly observing shifts in light, seasonal colour palettes and the interplay of textures found in nature. My design thinking is always in dialogue with the environment.

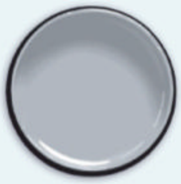
What role does colour play in your work?
Colour is at the heart of everything I do and I embrace it wholeheartedly. For me, colour isn't just decorative, it's transformative: breathing life into a space, setting the tone, evoking emotion and creating a powerful sense of identity. White walls do not feature in my world; my palettes are bold, unexpected and deeply harmonious. Colour sparks curiosity, creates mood and influences behaviour. In today's oversaturated market, originality is everything. Businesses that dare to be bold with colour stand out. I encourage my clients to be fearless, to create spaces that tell a story, invite connection and leave a lasting impression. I was honoured with two Resene Total Colour Awards this year for the Whitestone Cheese Diner & Deli project. The bold exterior palette acts as a vibrant beacon using Resene Lynchpin, Resene Double Alabaster and Resene Awaken, drawing customers in, while the interior captivates with a striking modern interpretation of art deco, using hues like Resene Sorrento and Resene Kalgoorie Sands, which deliver unforgettable visual impact.

How did you arrive at the design of this collab?
This collaboration was deeply personal – rooted in childhood memories of my mother Adi's home-based dried flower business during the droughts of the late 1980s. I vividly remember the textures and tonal shifts of the flowers as they dried, hanging in installations around the ceiling of our pool room. I remember the way their colours softened into muted hues that were just as captivating as were their fresh beginnings. That early exposure sparked a lifelong love of colour and nature, and also taught me about resilience, reinvention and the creative magic that can emerge in challenging times.

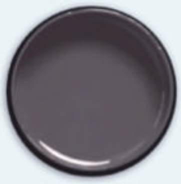
Tell us about your colour choices.
The colours are taken directly from the flowers drying in my design studio, which were picked three months ago and have now taken on beautiful dusky tones that all work together – Resene Salted Caramel, Resene Half Mischka and Resene Matakana.



Resene
Salted Caramel



Resene
Half Mischka



Resene
Matakana

THIS PAGE
Resene Matakana, Resene Half Mischka and Resene Salted Caramel. Creative direction: Thomas Cannings. Photography: Toaki Okano.

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Jason Mann Photography

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Congratulations to the finalists and winners of the 2025 Interior Awards. As sponsors since the start, we are proud to support exceptional New Zealand talent being showcased on the world stage.

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INTERIOR AWARDS 2025

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Awards —
Convenor's thoughts

Five years as convenor brings with it an inevitable degree of familiarity, at least with regards to our annual call for entries, the difficult decisions to be made over short-listing, an intense 48 hours of livestreamed judging and, ultimately, the weighty task of selecting the award-winners. But the real joy of the process is in the discovery – of beautiful projects, new designers, resourceful and innovative thinking, and the passion and soul so evident in the work. Not to mention the obvious and very positive impact these projects have on so many lives. Danish architect and urban designer Jan Gehl famously noted that "first we shape cities, then they shape us". The same can be said of interior spaces – they have the power to shape our thoughts, our mind-set and our mood. This year, we saw a small, creative workplace where environmentally aware employees can track their energy use in real time, we were shown a large hotel where international guests are wrapped in the narrative of Tāmaki Makaurau, absorbing it as if by osmosis during their stay, we were charmed by a modest, handcrafted kitchen that spoke to both its owners and its surroundings, and we marvelled at how an elegant retail space had blurred the boundaries between intimate dining and its patrons' subterranean wine cellars. For me, there's also joy in the way that the jury reacts to both the programme and the live presentations, and the "privilege" they feel to have been exposed to so many brilliant design minds and to listen to such inspirational thinking, even noting how fortunate they, as jurors, are to be in a position to "give kudos to those that deserve it". Together, we considered 30 exceptional projects and three incredibly talented emerging design professionals. We saw collaboration, craft, confidence and energy alongside superb execution and clever spatial design. As is often the case, our job wasn't easy. On behalf of the jury, I would like to congratulate all of our finalists for your outstanding work and thank you for sharing your journeys with us. Special congratulations are due to our 11 award-winners, including our striking Supreme Award winner. You and your projects represent the very best of interior design and the incredible talent that can be found within our industry. Finally, a special thank-you to our sponsors for your ongoing support and generosity, for which we are immensely grateful. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe.

Amanda Harkness

Awards —
Jury

Céili Murphy
Interior sector lead
Architectus Aotearoa

As the interior sector lead at Architectus Aotearoa, Céili Murphy combines creativity, strategic thinking and a commitment to sustainability to design spaces that uplift and inspire. Céili is also active in mentoring and guest lecturing, fostering a supportive and diverse design community.

Murali Bhaskar
Director
Boon

Murali Bhaskar is a director at Boon in Ngāmotu New Plymouth. With more than 30 years' experience in master-planning civic, community, cultural, urban design and residential typologies, he has also worked on both tourism and education projects.

Natasha Markham
Founder
MAUD

A registered architect and qualified urban designer, Natasha Markham founded MAUD in 2015 as a boutique studio specialising in well-crafted residential and commercial architecture, and offering urban design services to projects at all scales.

Sam Griffin
Creative director
Ctrl Space

Sam Griffin is the creative director of Ctrl Space, a trans-Tasman design studio which has crafted some of this country's most celebrated hospitality venues. Since stepping into the creative director role in 2018, Sam has focused on pushing the boundaries of design and exploring new creative frontiers.

Amanda Harkness
Deputy editor
and interior editor
Architecture NZ

Now in her fifth year as convenor of the Interior Awards jury, Amanda Harkness is the deputy editor and interior editor at *Architecture NZ* and former editor of *Houses* magazine. Her writing focuses largely on commercial, hospitality, retail and residential interior projects.

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SHANE SENNE
GLENYS MOY
LESA STOCKLEY

TANIA BAILEY
BRITTANY SMITH
KATE WARD

Autex Acoustics

ANTON AGNEW
CAROLINE DAVIES
NICOLA TAYLOR
DEV POKHREL

JACK SUN
SARAH COLLINS
ROMAR SANTIAGO

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TJ LEE
SHARON PEARCE
KARMEN HOARE
AMY WATKINS

JOHN GILBERT
LILY GILBERT
KATE LEE

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KIM MOYNAGH
NICOLA MASON
KATHIE VALINTINE

BIG RIVER
PANELS

LACIE DUFTY
KELLY MORRIS
ROSS MILLIN
EMMETT KING

INZIDE
sustainable flooring solutions

STEVE ASCHEBROCK
JARROD LANGSTONE
STELLA HAMILTON-WALLACE
BIANCA SANDS

RICHARD THORBURN
ANDY THORBURN

Winner —
Supreme

Winner —
Residential

Design —
Monk Mackenzie

Palimpsest House

AUCKLAND REGION

Jury comment —
Approached through a forest of pines and set in the dunes where trees give way to sand, Palimpsest House carries the potency of its setting into every interior detail. The contrast between dark, rough pine bark and fine, pale sand informs a restrained yet sensorial material palette that includes textured concrete, stained timber, limestone and bespoke metal details. Consistent with the architectural intent, the interiors are meticulously detailed and reductive in approach — choreographing light, movement and touch to create a quietly immersive experience, deeply rooted in place. An exceptional study in refinement, the result is a calm, poetic, beautifully resolved interior, pure in expression yet complex beneath the surface.

design —
Monk Mackenzie
monkmackenzie.com

design team —
Hamish Monk,
Dean Mackenzie,
Rachel Berry,
Nicholas Genever,
Abdallah Alayan

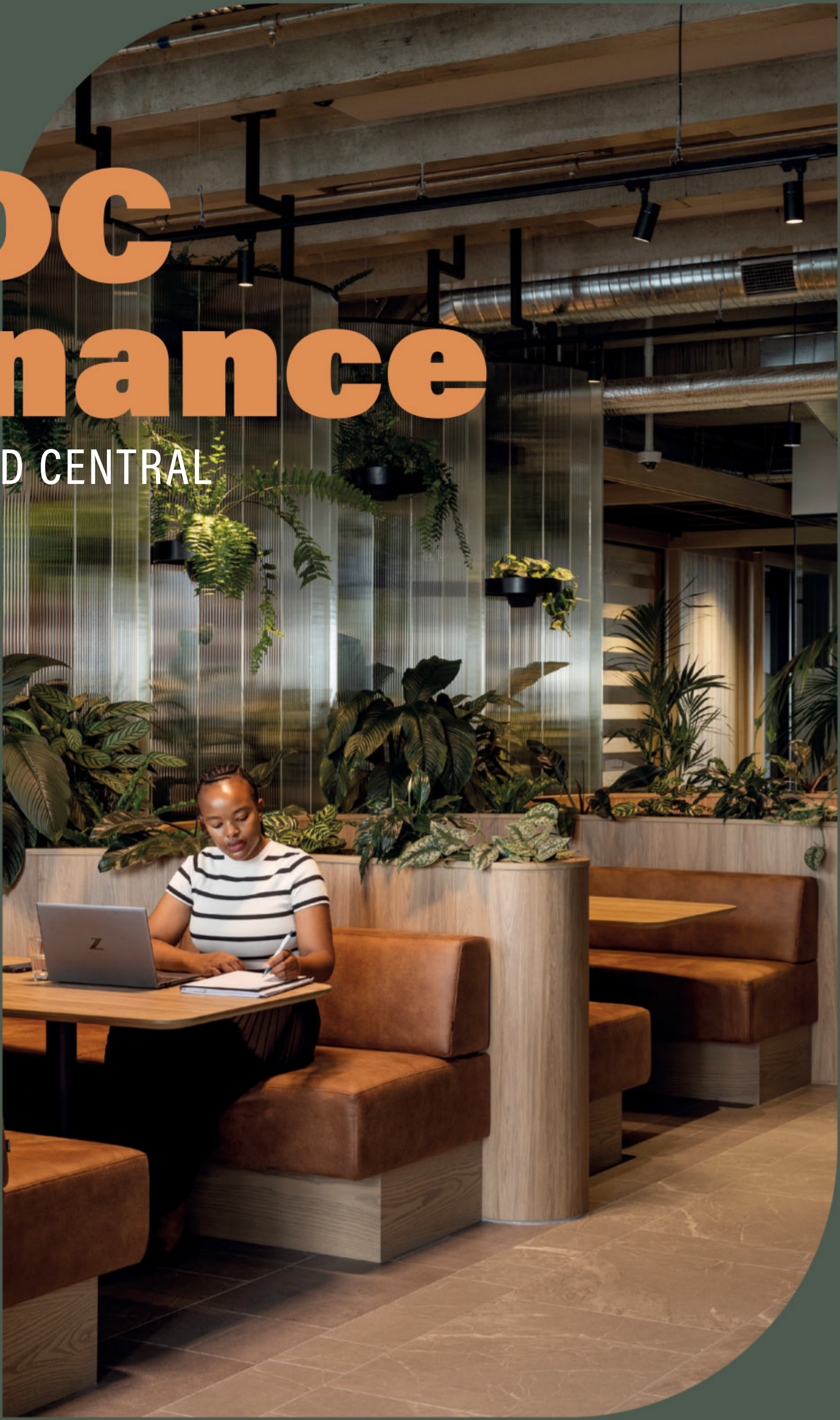
photography —
Dawid Wisniewski,
Samuel Negash,
Abdallah Alayan

Winner —
Workplace over 1000m^2

Design —
STACK Interiors

UDC Finance

AUCKLAND CENTRAL



client —
UDC Finance
udc.co.nz

design —
STACK Interiors
stack.co.nz

design team —
Jesse James Smith, Mikayla Roadhouse, Joyce Yang, Abigal Simango, Arno van der Westhuizen

photography —
David Straight

Jury comment —

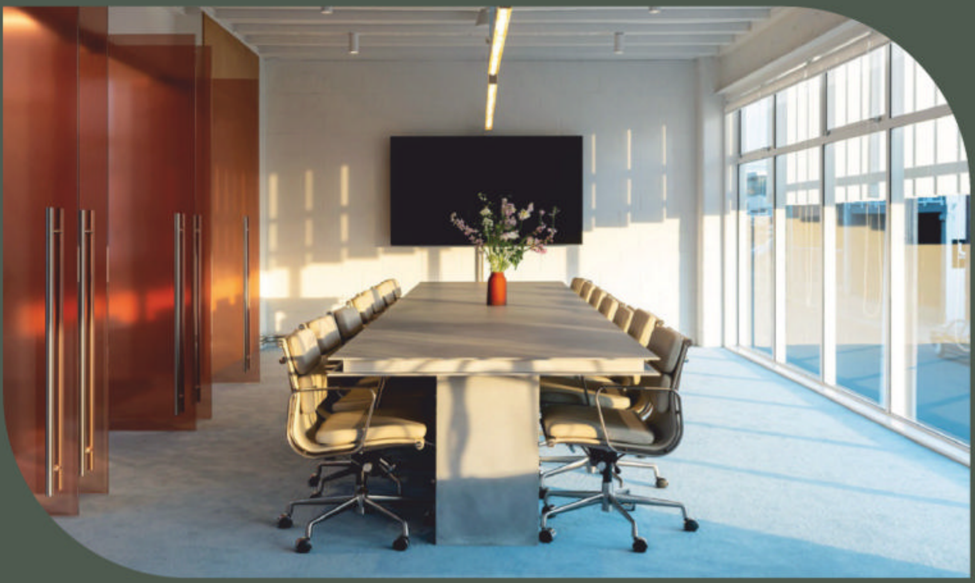
In a standout example of workplace design done right, the designers have combined strategic spatial planning, a clear narrative, innovative materials and high-level execution to create a distinctly local work environment that is sharp, intelligent and restrained in all the right ways. The concept of organising the floor layout and spatial zoning around a typical Aotearoa farm is both creative and meaningful, reflecting a strong connection to the whenua and acknowledging the client's commitment to New Zealand. Clever detailing — such as the sophisticated-yet-simple reference to the classic barn door — paired with a warm colour palette, tan upholstery, timber joinery and lush interior greenery, creates a sleek, welcoming office with depth and meaning in its design.

Winner —
Workplace up to 1000m²

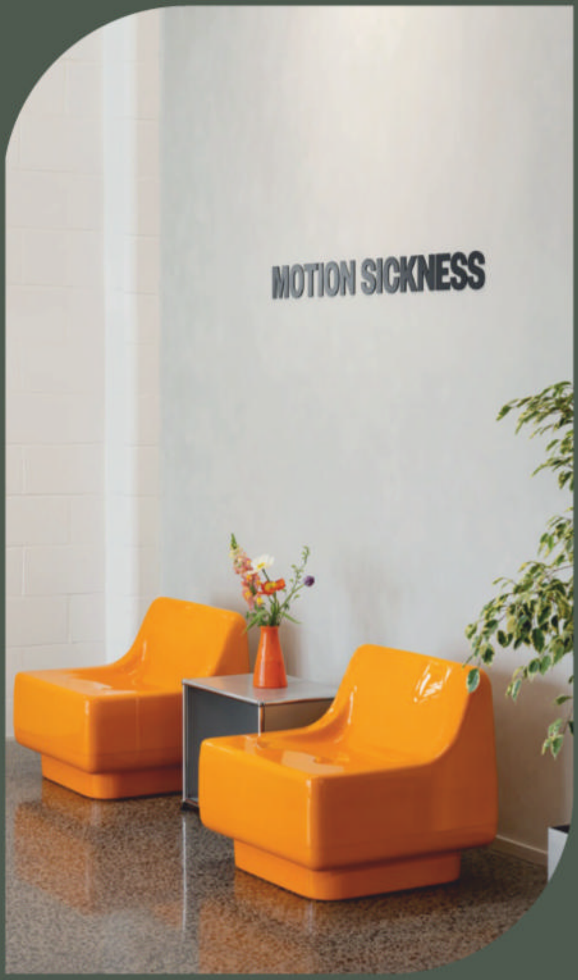
Design —
Wonder

Motion Sickness Studio

GREY LYNN



Jury comment —
Conceived as an engine room for creativity and collaboration, this headquarters for a leading creative agency channels the company's distinctive creative voice into a richly cinematic interior. Soft hues and layered spaces set the scene, while the interplay of slick finishes and vintage pieces reflects a culture that values both polish and personality. A palette of soft blues and rosy oranges, paired with rose-tinted glazing, evokes a sense of nostalgia that feels both fresh and familiar, while a seamless shift from focused work to vibrant social settings reflects the spirited, youthful nature of the studio and the ingenuity of the design team.



client —
Sam Stuchbury,
Hilary Ngan Kee,
Alex McManus
motionsickness.co.nz

design —
Wonder
wonder.group

design team —
Buster Caldwell,
Stephanie Viterbo,
Sophie Gillies

photography —
Jono Parker

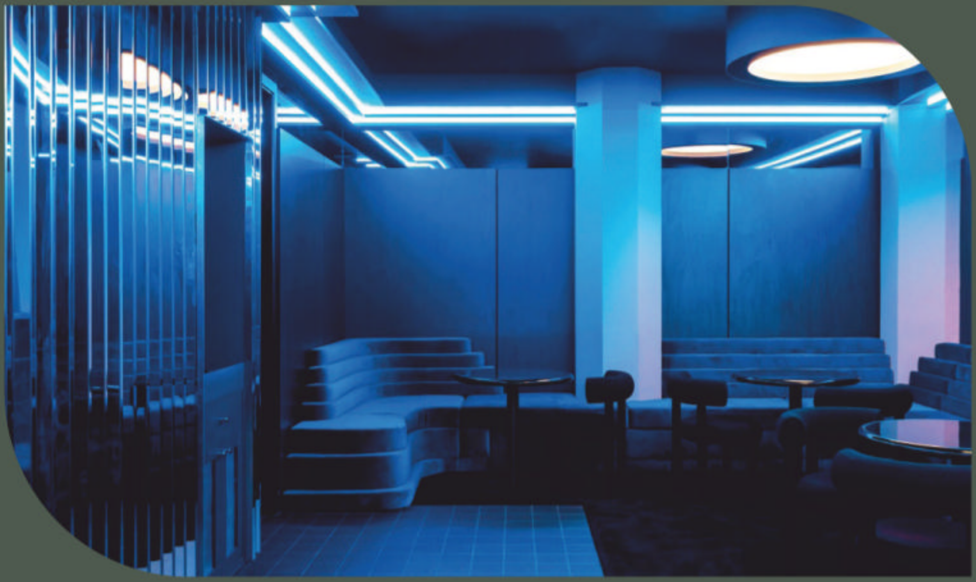
Winner —
Hospitality

Design —
Izzard Design

Quinn Bar

AUCKLAND CENTRAL

Jury comment —
A compact-yet-striking hospitality project, Quinn Bar delivers originality and delight. Bold use of lighting and reflection creates a sense of escapism with a subtle futuristic edge, while deco-inspired detailing pays tasteful homage to the building's heritage.
A great deal of thought has gone into the design, from the sculptural seating, which weaves through the space adding softness and form, to the custom stainless-steel wall lining surprising with its shimmer, to the digitally controlled, adaptable lighting adding atmosphere to the interior. Quinn Bar is an underground gem with personality to burn — immersive, expressive and unforgettable.

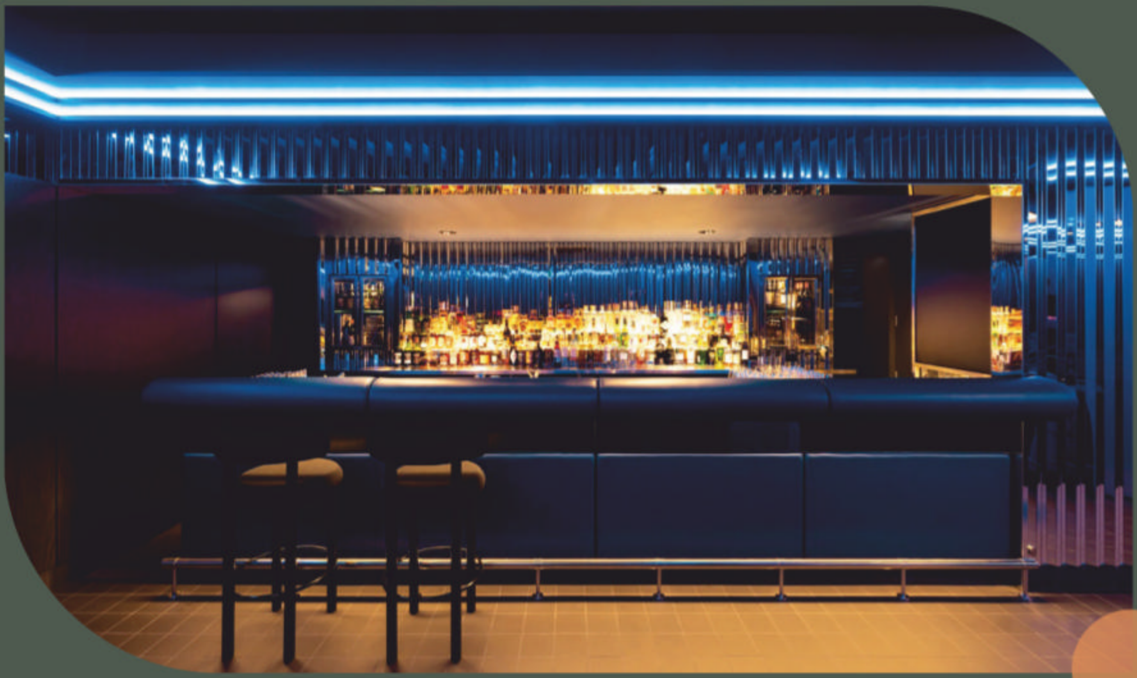


client —
Ofir Yudilevich
quinnbar.com

design —
Izzard Design
izzard.co.nz

design team —
Paul Izzard, Kate Dalton

photography —
Jono Parker

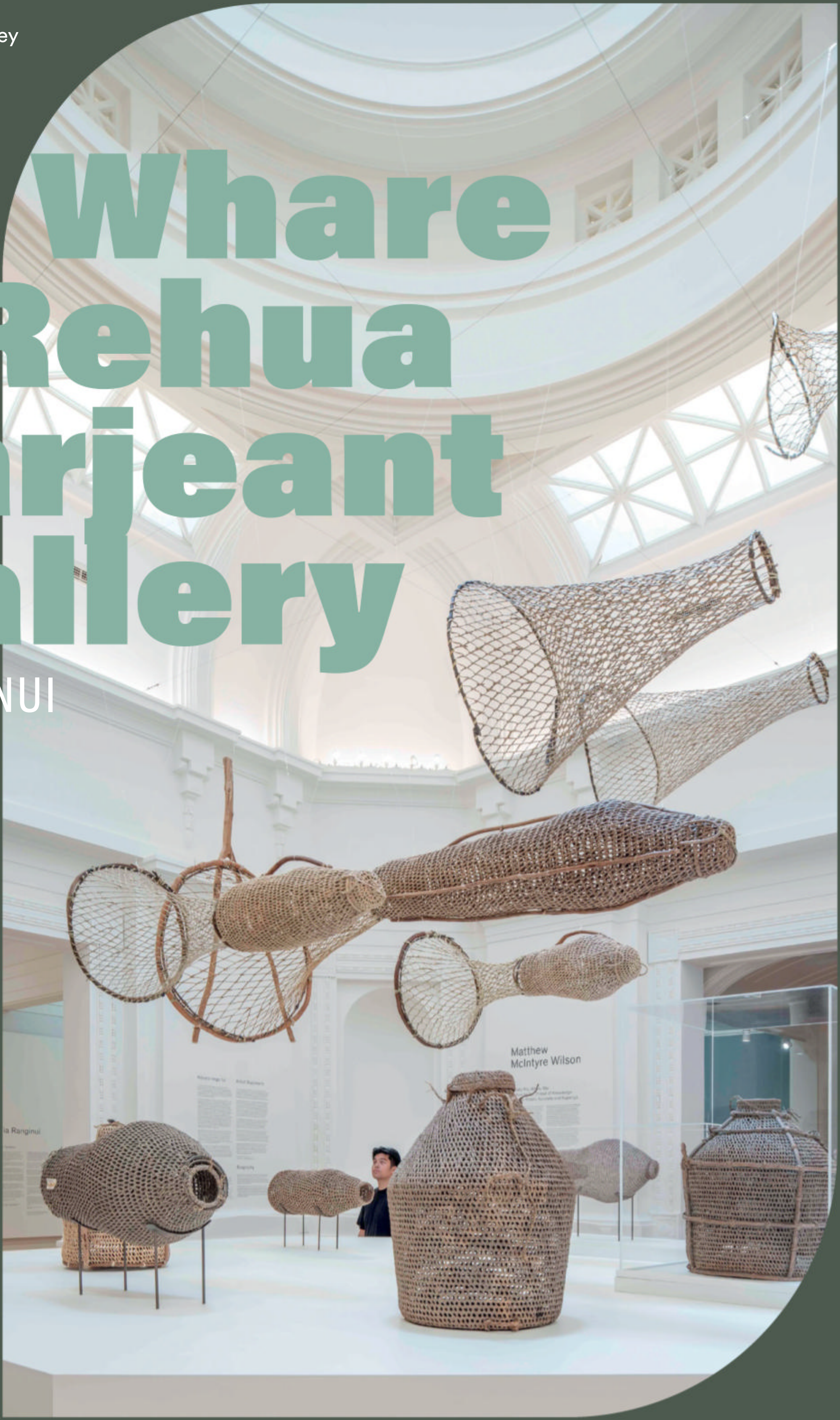


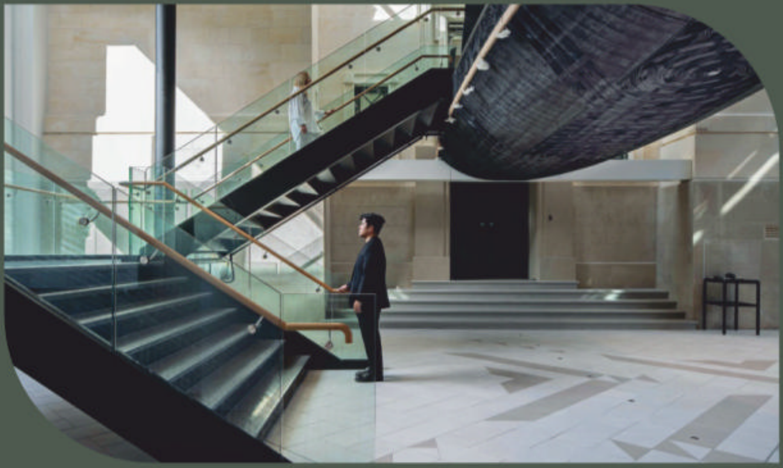
Winner —
Civic

Design —
Warren and Mahoney

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery

WHANGANUI


Matthew
McIntyre Wilson



Jury comment —
Originally conceived in 1999, this restoration and expansion of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery has been profoundly shaped by the decades-long journey towards realisation. Time, setbacks and evolving dialogue with mana whenua have enriched the design, grounding it more deeply in the cultural and environmental context of Whanganui, and clearly reflecting an understanding of, and respect for, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, mātauranga Māori and bicultural frameworks. From the play of light on the awa (river) emerging as a guiding motif to the striking waka staircase at the entrance to the thoughtfully curated gallery spaces, this is a compelling example of culturally responsive, collaborative design, resulting in a deeply respectful, atmospheric space that honours place, history and people.

client —
Whanganui
District Council
whanganui.govt.nz

design —
Warren and Mahoney
wam.studio

design team —
Ralph Roberts,
Emelia Atkins,
Cliff Leong,
Savanah Hunt

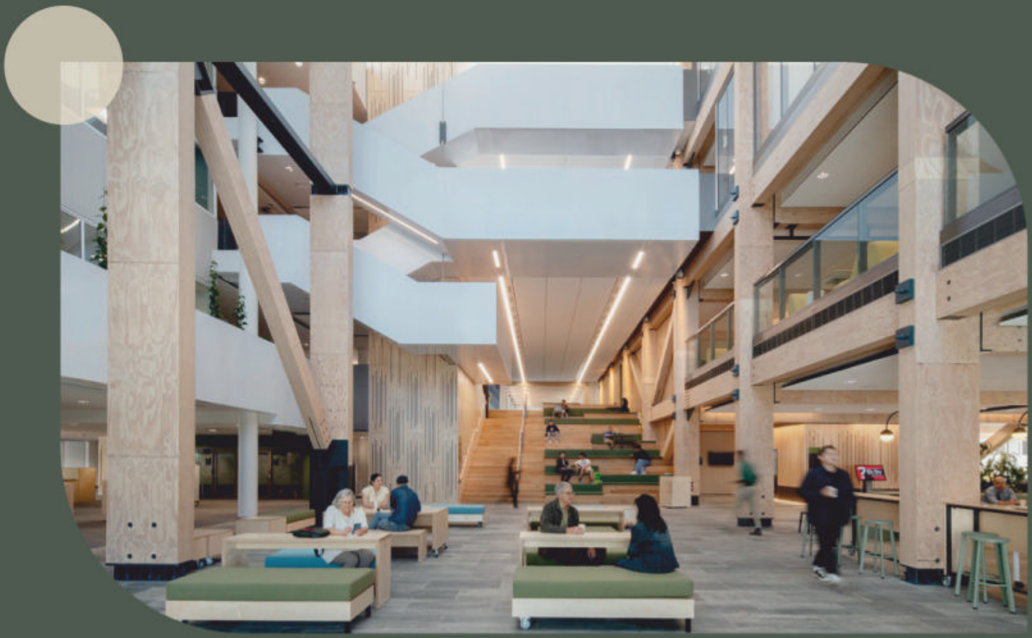
photography —
Andy Spain

Winner —
Education

Design —
Jasmax

AUT Tukutuku

NORTHCOTE



Jury comment —
Designed to be the new heart of AUT's North Shore campus, Tukutuku's interior enhances the architectural vision by introducing welcoming, flexible spaces that support both focused study and social interaction. The use of simple, adaptable furniture in the atrium creates inviting pockets that break down the scale and offer comfort within the expansive space. This thoughtful layering of materiality, scale and function ensures the interior feels human, purposeful and deeply connected to its users. The colour palette complements and celebrates the natural timber structure, reinforcing the building's sustainable and environmentally conscious design ethos, and the overall atmosphere radiates warmth and comfort, creating an inclusive and nurturing environment for students and staff.

client —
Auckland University
of Technology (AUT)
aut.ac.nz

design —
Jasmax
jasmax.com

design team —
Chris Scott, Barbara van Zyl,
Sarah Kirk, Jun Tsujimoto,
Mary Henry

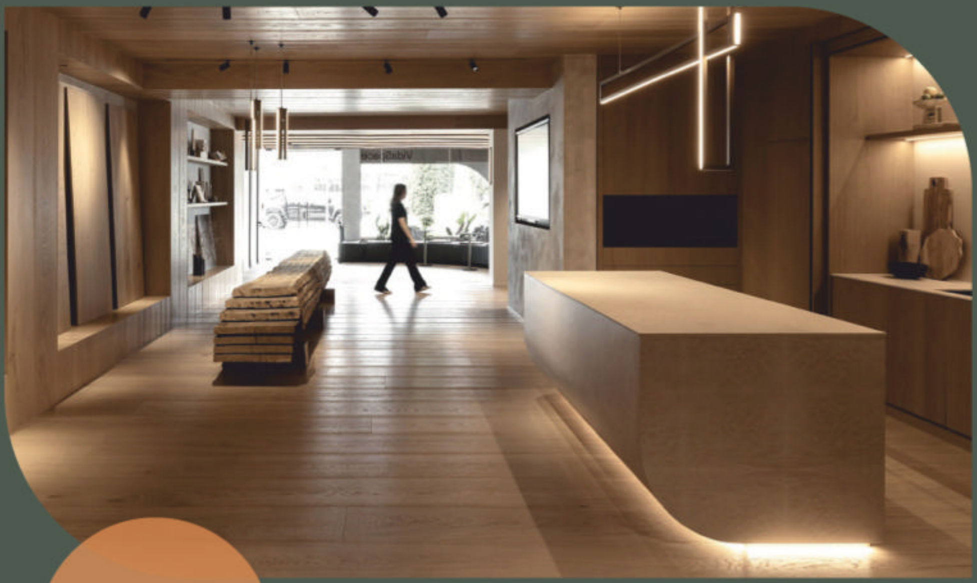
photography —
Jasmax

Winner —
Retail

Design —
VidaSpace in association with
Warren and Mahoney

VidaSpace Showroom

CHRISTCHURCH



client —
VidaSpace
vidaspace.co.nz

design —
VidaSpace in association
with Warren and Mahoney
wam.studio

design team —
Scott Compton,
Yuran Qin,
Ahlia McKenzie,
Jimmy Simmons

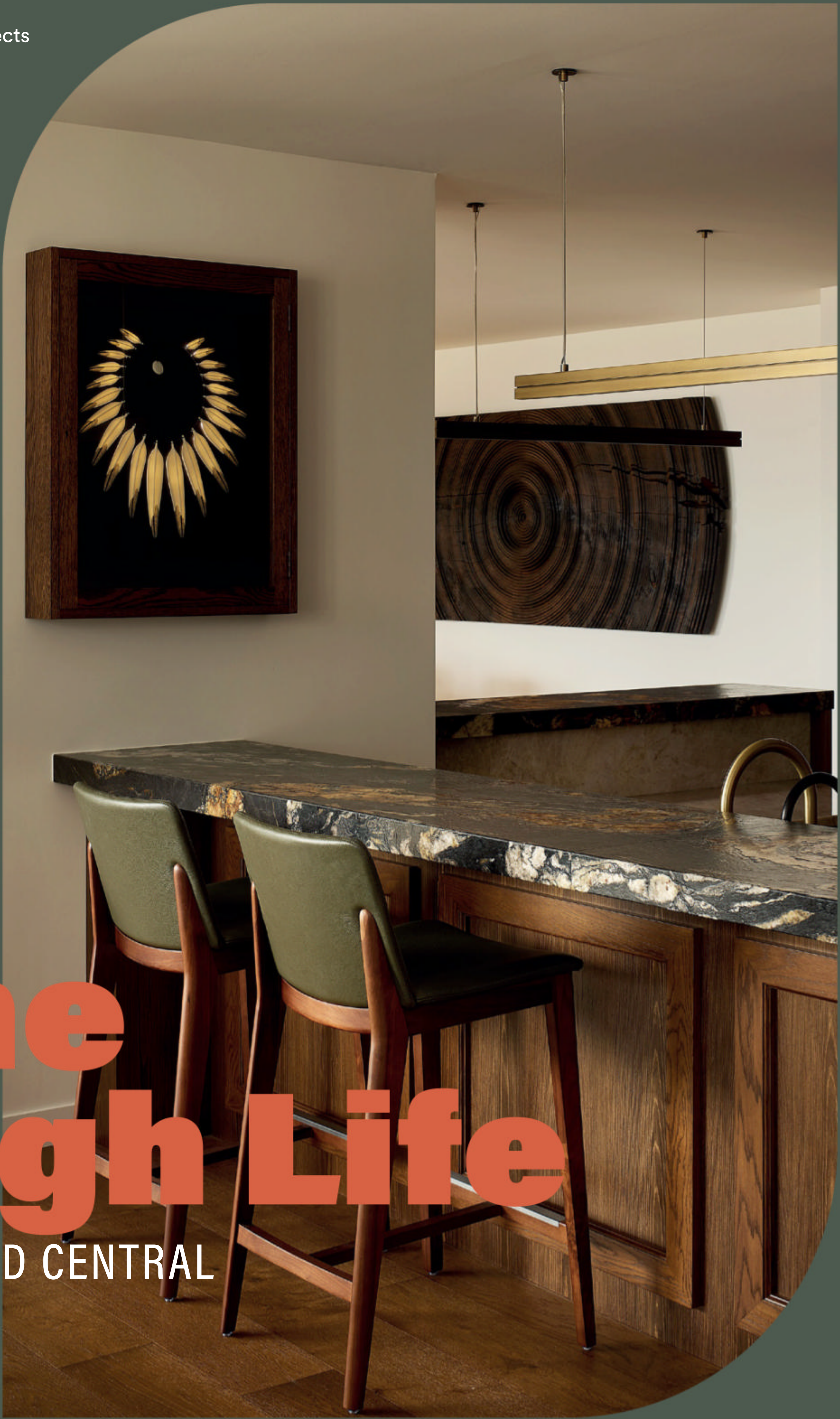
photography —
Jono Parker

Jury comment —

Redefining the retail environment by grounding the experience in the essence of its product, this showroom is designed to engage the senses — immersive, tactile and full of quiet discovery. With a minimalist elegance and a narrative that feels authentic and material-led, the designers have adeptly shifted the focus from transaction to connection. Timber is celebrated through rich layering and refined detailing, with elements such as the sculptural desk and striking spliced log playing with weight and lightness, adding a sense of craftsmanship and intrigue. The result is a sensory space that invites genuine connection, elevating material selection to memorable storytelling.

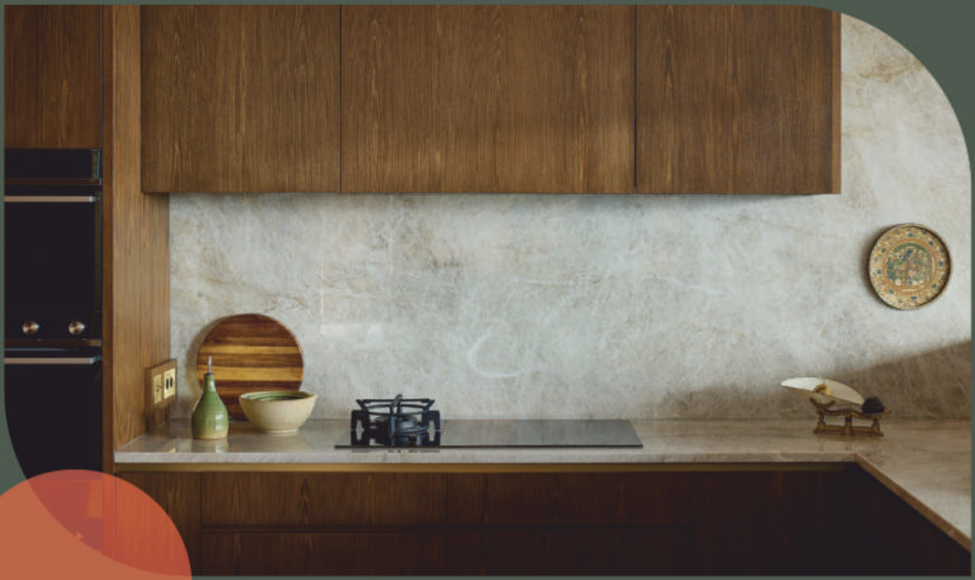
Winner —
Residential Kitchen

Design —
Rogan Nash Architects



The High Life

AUCKLAND CENTRAL



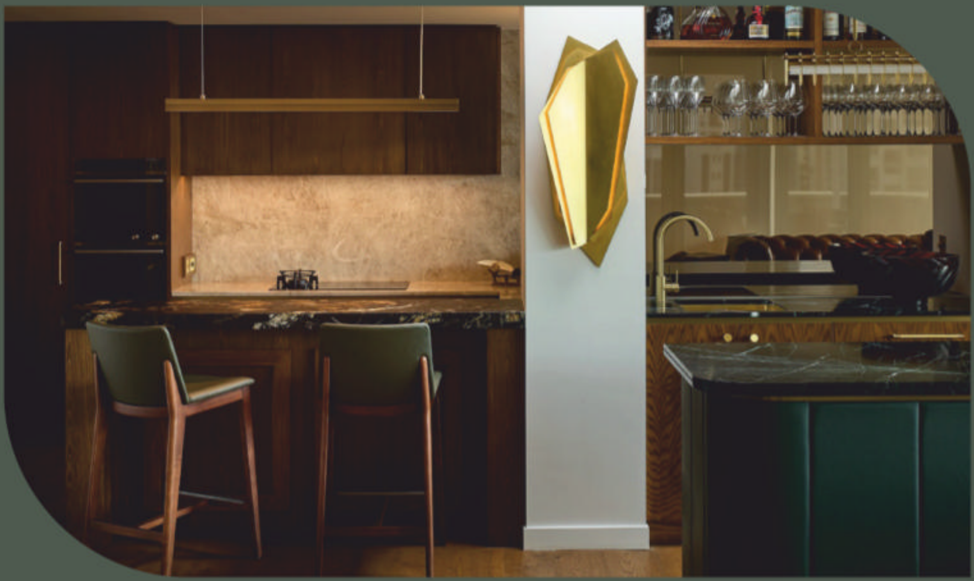
Jury comment —
Planned around a love of entertaining, this apartment kitchen celebrates the clients' passion for British vintage design. The layout negotiates the challenges of working in an existing building through clever problem-solving and refined spatial thinking, while also considering the ways in which the space can function for both the couple and a crowd. A rich, layered palette of materials, including various stones, brass and leather in British racing green (naturally), channels the clients' quirky eclecticism, injecting warmth and vibrance in all the right places.
The result is a confident, character-filled kitchen that punches well above its weight.

clients —
Charlotte Lockhart
and Andrew Barnes

design —
Rogan Nash Architects
rogannash.com

design team —
Eva Nash,
Kate Rogan

photography —
Simon Wilson

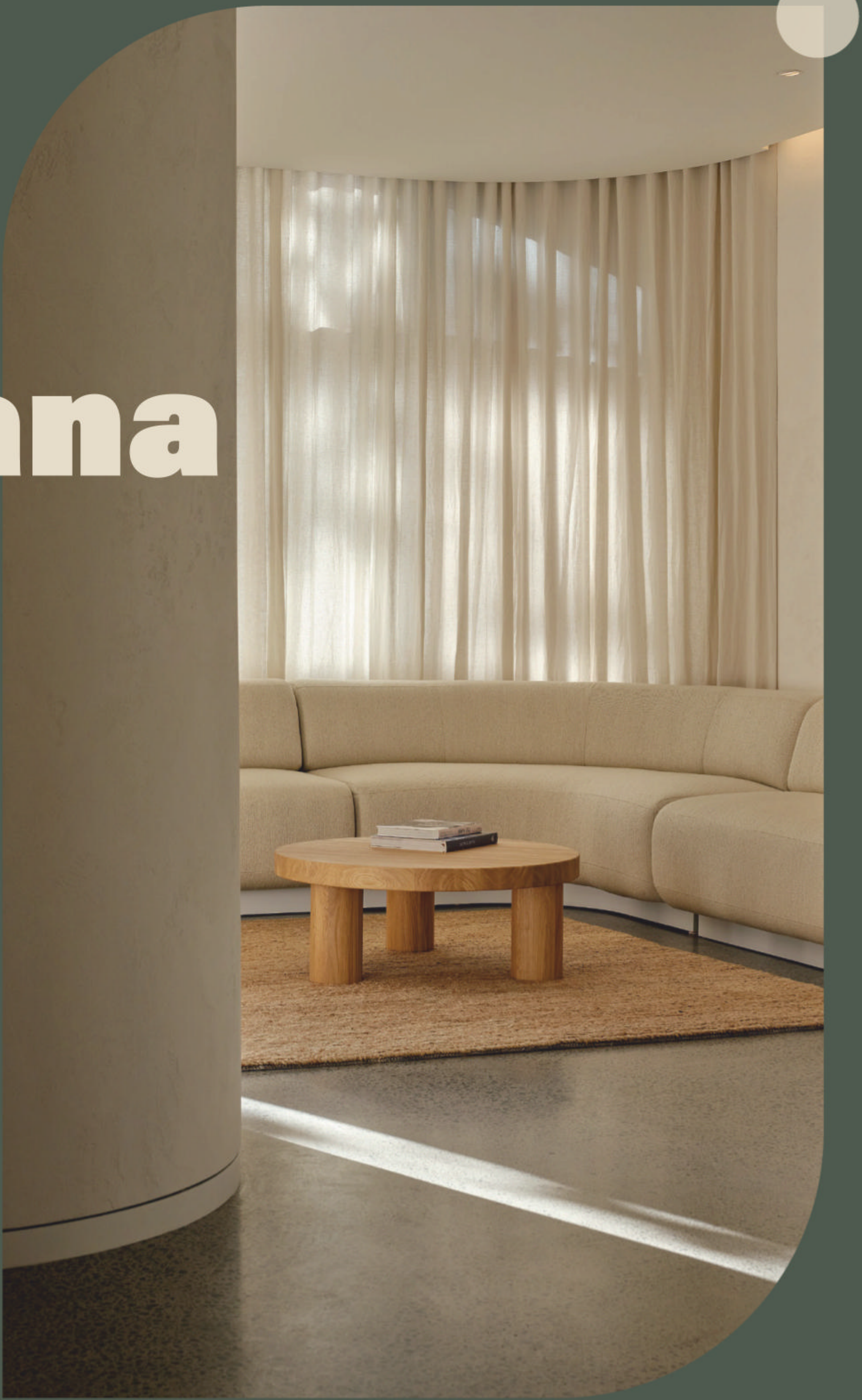


Winner —
Healthcare and Wellness

Design —
Pennant & Triumph

Hana

PARNELL



Jury comment —
A masterclass in calm, considered design, Hana Parnell quietly conceals all the essential functional services of a wellness space, wrapping guests in a sense of ease from the moment they enter. Heritage elements are thoughtfully integrated within a refined interior that prioritises the customer experience at every turn, while gentle curves, indirect lighting, natural materials and acoustic privacy create an immersive environment, which feels both luxurious and restorative. From the exposed timber columns to the discreet retail and welcome areas, every detail has been considered to support a cohesive and deeply relaxing journey for visitors. The result is a beautiful space that offers comfort, clarity and retreat.

client —
Sara Higgins
hana.nz

design —
Pennant & Triumph
pennantandtriumph.com

design team —
Justin Roderique,
Bethan James

photography —
Hamish Melville

Winner —
Emerging Design Professional

Design practice —
Warren and Mahoney

Matt Reid

WARREN AND MAHONEY

designer —
Matt Reid

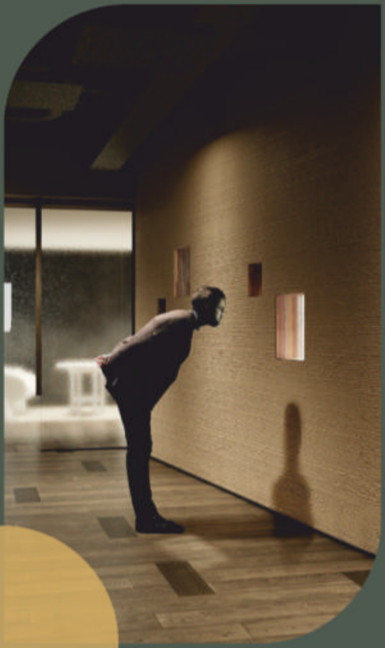
current design practice —
Warren and Mahoney
wam.studio

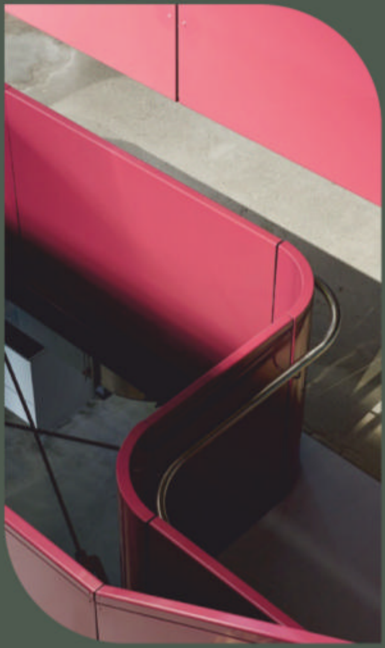
project involvement —
Bowen Generator,
Microsoft,
Precinct Suites

photography —
Thomas Seear-Budd

Jury comment —

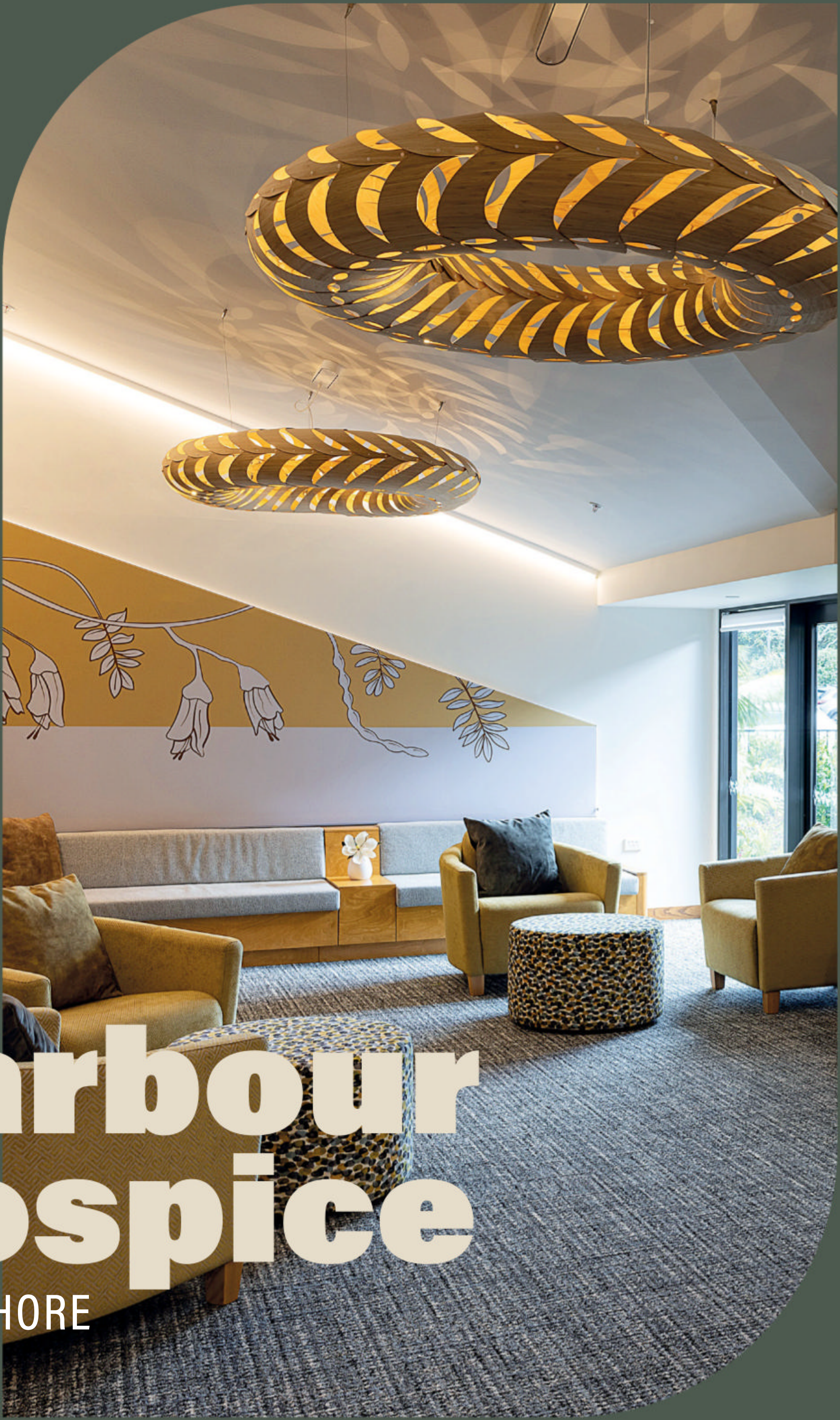
Quietly confident and deeply attuned to detail, this emerging designer is already shaping workplace environments at scale, leading projects that elevate everyday experiences for government and corporate clients alike. With a practice grounded on a love of sketching and an appreciation for collaboration, Matt brings clarity, care and imagination to each project. His work demonstrates a strong commitment to design excellence, with projects that are deeply considerate of client and end-user needs. His progression from graduate to project lead reflects a clear growth in capability, underpinned by professional dedication and a drive to deliver meaningful, well-resolved outcomes.





Winner —
Community Impact

Design —
Klein Architects



Harbour Hospice

NORTH SHORE

Jury comment —
This thoughtful re-imagining of a palliative care unit reorganises its layout to reflect contemporary models of care, placing dignity, comfort and connection at the forefront. Inclusive whānau spaces enable families to come together at what can be the most difficult time of their lives and provide accommodation for those wanting to be close to their loved ones. Throughout, a palette of natural materials and warm hues modernises the environment while fostering a calm, compassionate setting for patients, their families and staff alike.

client —
Harbour Hospice
North Shore
harbourhospice.org.nz

design —
Klein Architects
klein.co.nz

design team —
Joseph Gibbon,
Neesha Morar,
Nicholas Wedde,
Dean Shanud,
Rachael Rush

photography —
Mark Scowen

Sandtrap

design —
Lloyd Hartley
lloydhartley.com

client —
Jenny and Norm Thompson

design team —
Mike Hartley, Ben Lloyd

photography —
David Straight

design —
Roberts Gray Architects
robertsgray.co

client —
Sarah and Philip Gray

design team —
Jimmy Gray, Elspeth Gray,
Nick Roberts

photography —
Sam Hartnett

S.K.I. House Wānaka

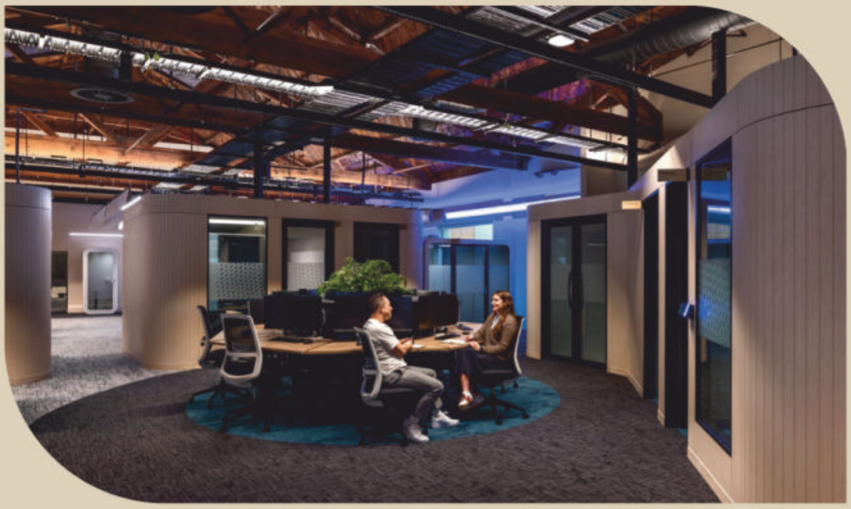
Matuku Moana

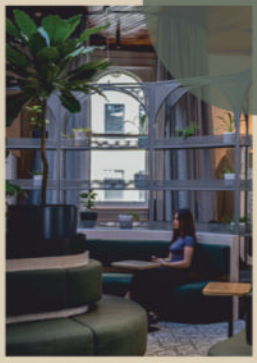
design —
Studio Brick Architects
studiobrick.nz

client —
Jeremy and Anna Brick

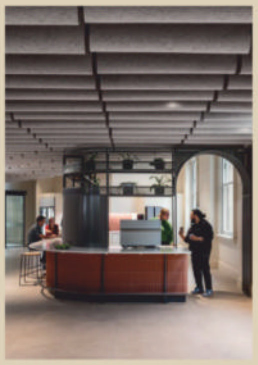
design team —
Jeremy Brick, Anna Brick

photography —
David Straight





Meridian Energy Wellington



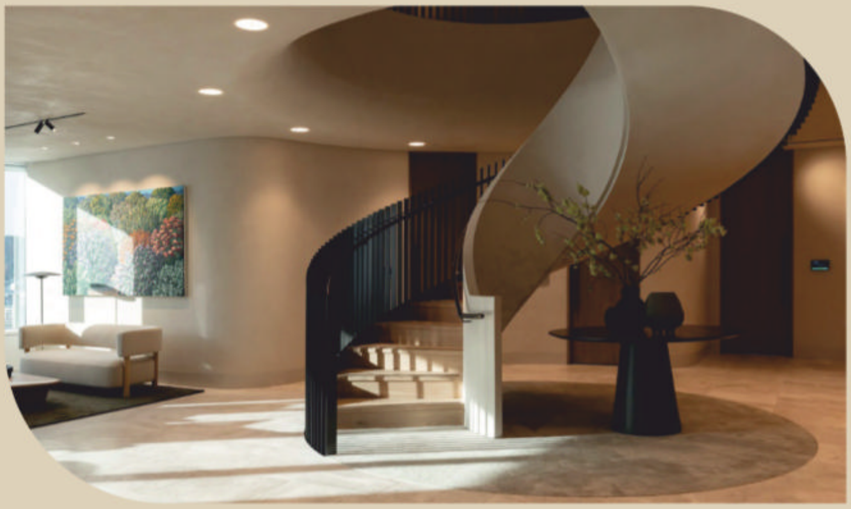
design —
Unispace
unispace.com

client —
Meridian Energy
meridianenergy.co.nz

design team —
Daniel Grinter, Darcy Utting, Rachel McPherson-Parker, Nick Wong

photography —
Unispace,
Lawrence Anderson

Russell McVeagh Wellington



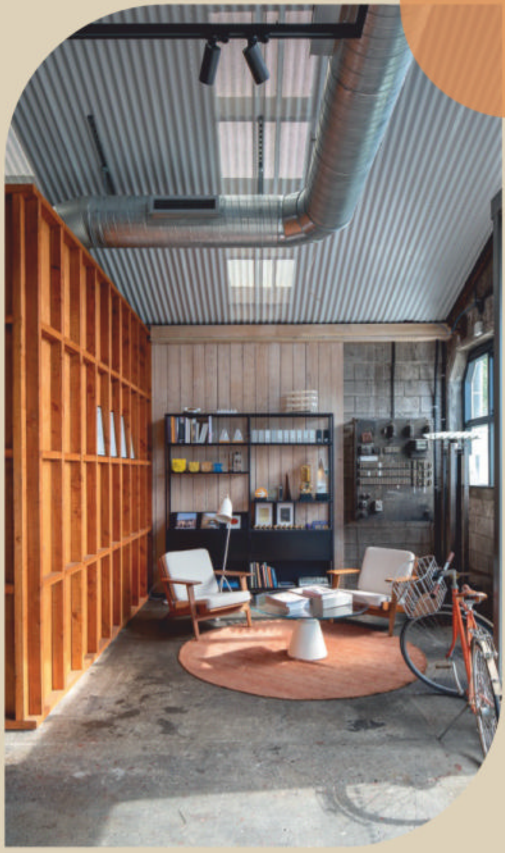
design —
Unispace, in association with Emma Hofmann
unispace.com
emmahofmann.co.nz

client —
Russell McVeagh
russellmcveagh.com

design team —
Harry Rowntree, Sally O'Neale, Caroline Griffin, Chris Kim, Angie Wang, Emma Hofmann

photography —
Jono Parker

Finalists —
Workplace under 1000m²



RTA Studio - Studio

design —
RTA Studio
rtastudio.co.nz

client —
RTA Studio
rtastudio.co.nz

design team —
Rich Naish, Moshin Mussa, Mitchell Round, Nadia Rivai, Jack McKinney

photography —
Patrick Reynolds

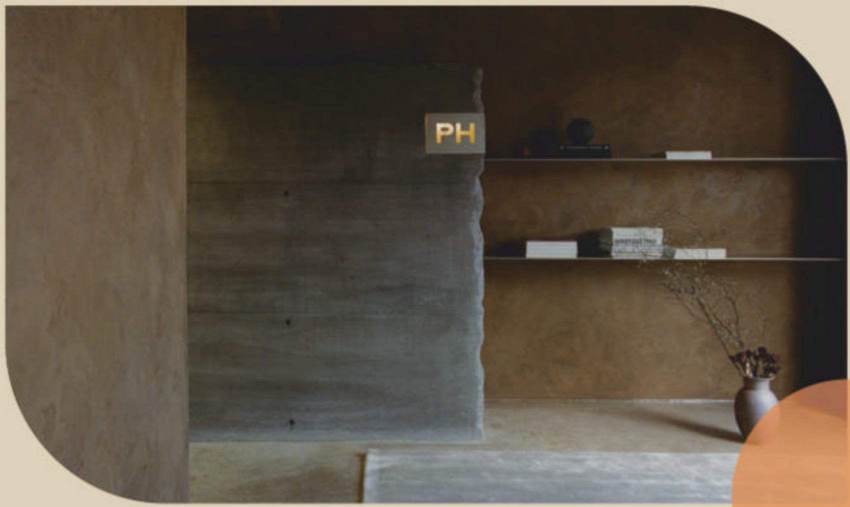
design —
Studio 11:11
studio-11-11.com

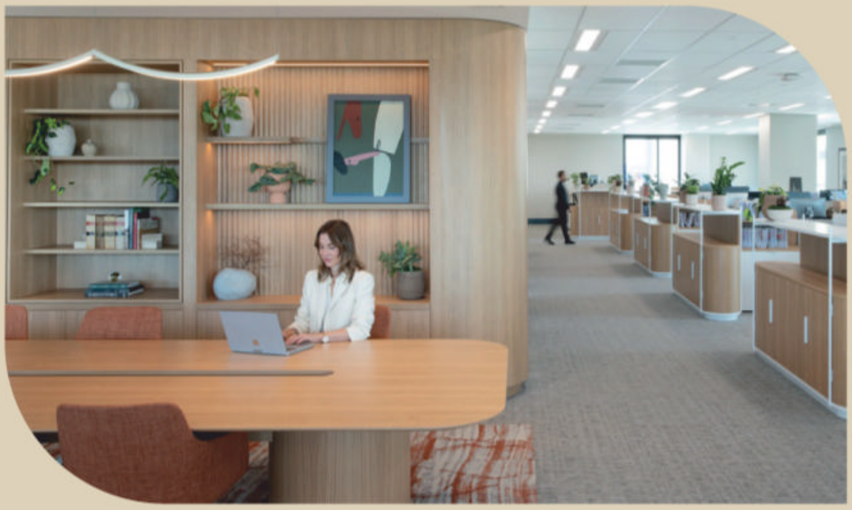
client —
PH Digital
ph.digital

design team —
Annabel Smart, Nathan Varga

photography —
Thomas Seear-Budd

PH Digital Head Office





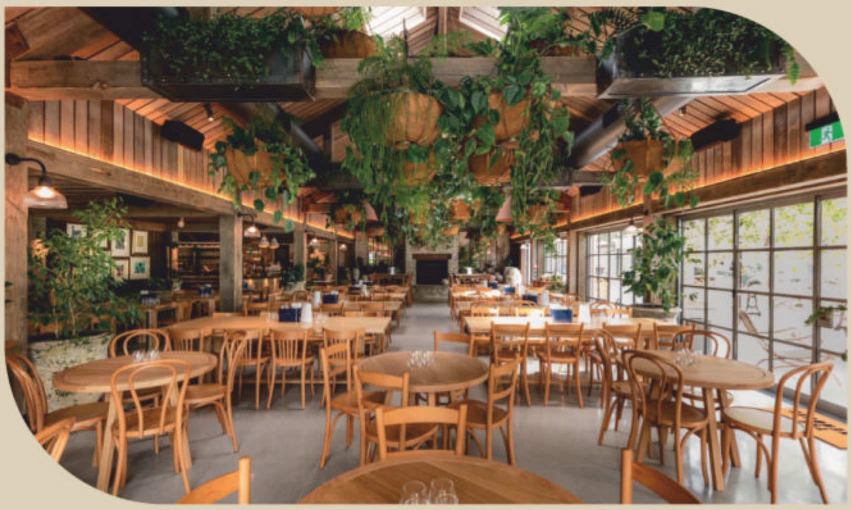
Buddle Findlay Christchurch

design —
Jasmax
jasmax.com

client —
Buddle Findlay
buddlefindlay.com

design team —
Anna Hill, Alan McCorkindale, Daniel Smith, Jill Donaghy, Christian Pistauer

photography —
Jasmax



The Bakehouse

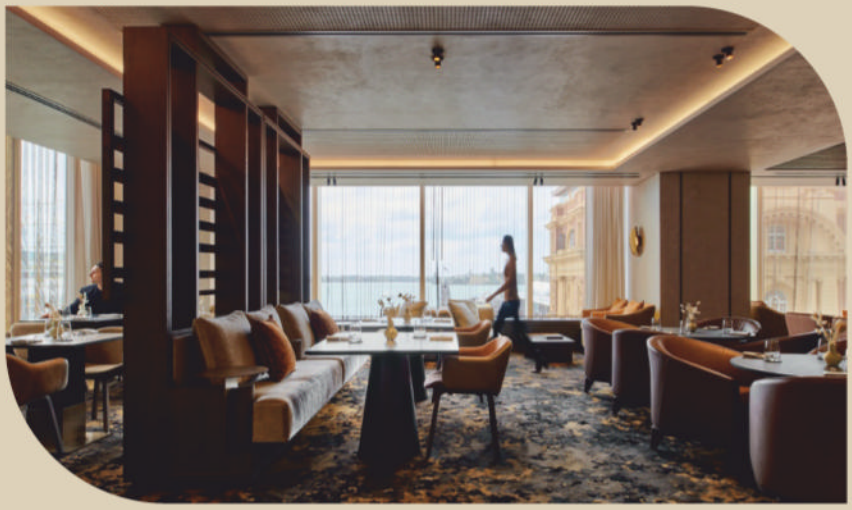
design —
SA Studio and
Alexander & Co.
sastudio.co.nz
alexanderand.co

client —
Winton Land
winton.nz

design team —
Jessie Sutherland,
Jeremy Bull, Alice Nogues,
Jessie Wei, Alex Watts

photography —
Vaughan Brookfield

InterContinental Hotel

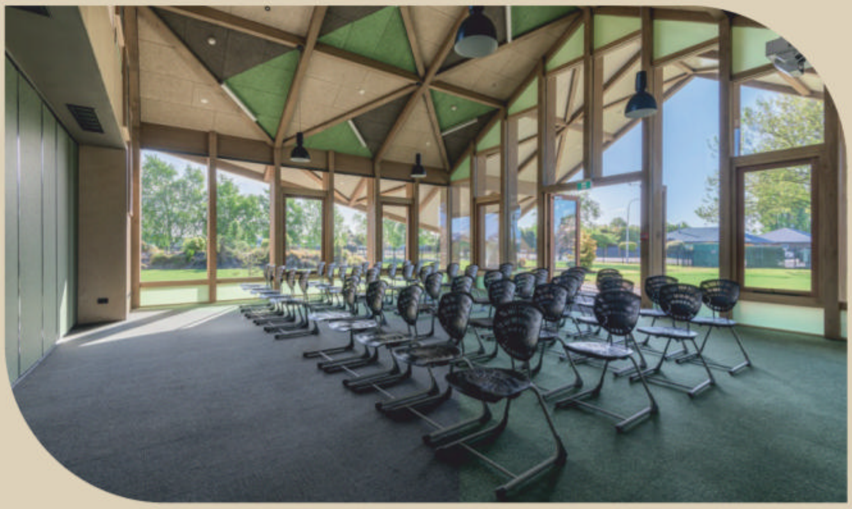


design —
Warren and Mahoney
wam.studio

client —
Precinct and IHG
precinct.co.nz
ihg.com

design team —
Scott Compton, Michael
Mason, Anne Carrington,
Kelsey Muir, Daniel Kempka

photography —
Nicole England



Te Ao Mārama Whare

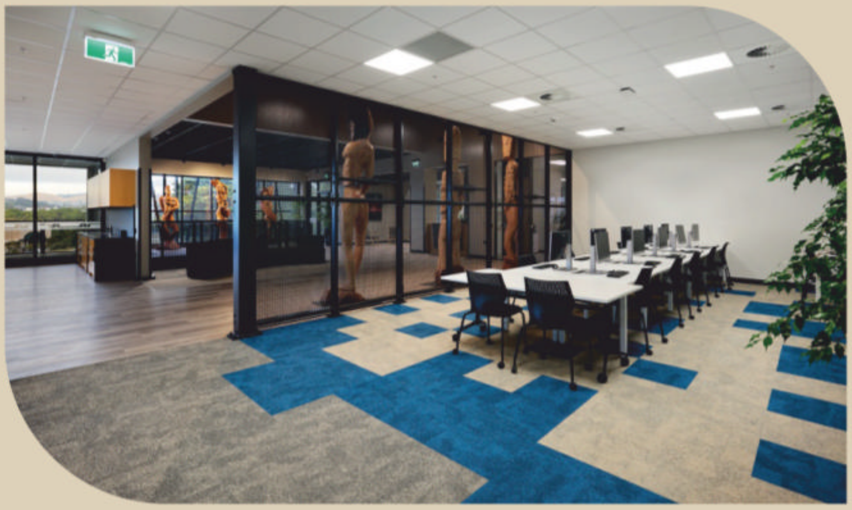
design —
Stufkens + Chambers Architects
scarchitects.co.nz

client —
Rangiora High School
rangiorahigh.school.nz

design team —
Marcus Stufkens,
Simon Adnitt,
Joseph Yu, Jack Dudley

photography —
Anthony Turnham

Te Ao Mārama Campus



design —
APG Architects
apgarchitects.com

client —
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa
twoa.ac.nz

design team —
Ces Scott, Camila Renault,
Maddie Payne,
Thomas Brock, Jess Ware

photography —
Amanda Aitken

The Wine Room

design —
Space Studio and
Three Sixty Architecture
spacestudio.co.nz
threesixtyarch.co.nz

client —
Atelier Nash
ateliernash.co.nz

design team —
Vee Kessner, Sophie Gibbs,
David Nash, Tom Norman,
Rob Bosma

photography —
Jono Parker

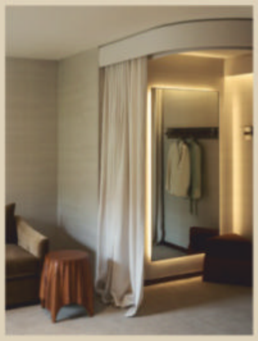
Muse Arrowtown

design —
Nikki Wilson Studio
nikkiwilson.co.nz

client —
Olivia Vincent Healy
museboutique.co.nz

design team —
Nikki Wilson,
Lauren Hickling

photography —
Simon Devitt



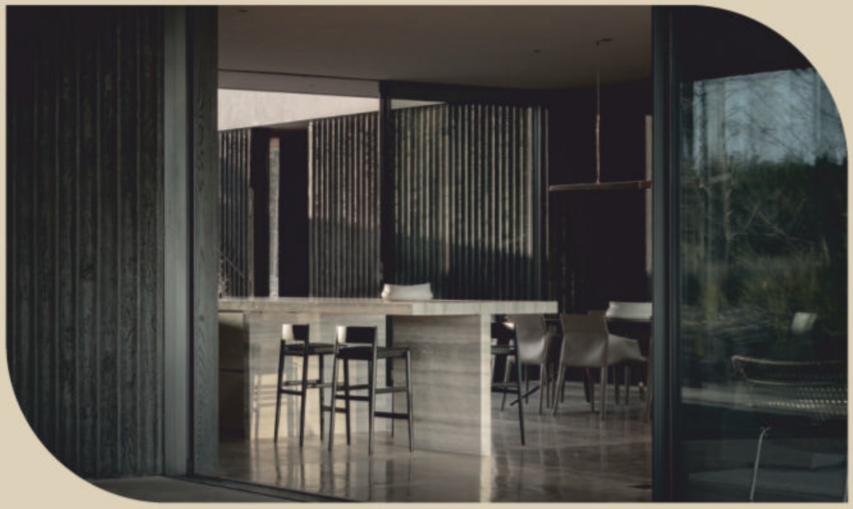
BNZ

design —
Warren and Mahoney
wam.studio

client —
BNZ
bnz.co.nz

design team —
Gareth Huston, Keri Drecki,
Bella McMahon, Sunny Shin

photography —
Hamish Melville,
Sam Hartnett



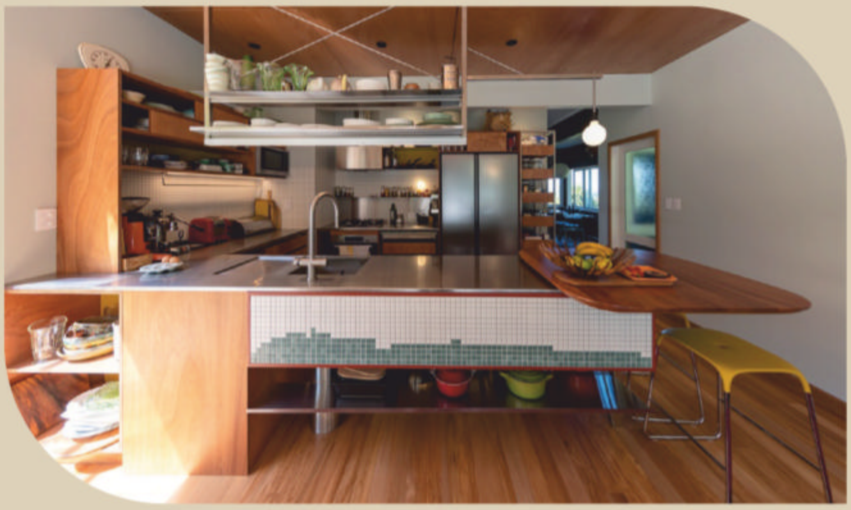
design —
Monk Mackenzie
monkmackenzie.com

design team —
Hamish Monk,
Dean Mackenzie, Rachel
Berry, Nicholas Genever,
Abdallah Alayan

photography —
Dawid Wisniewski,
Hamish Monk,
Abdallah Alayan

Palimpsest House

Cornwallis Kitchen



design —
Atelier Jones Design
atelierjonesdesign.co.nz

designer —
Raimana Jones

photography —
Raimana Jones

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Auckland, 1023
+64 9 379 9680
auckland@ecc.co.nz

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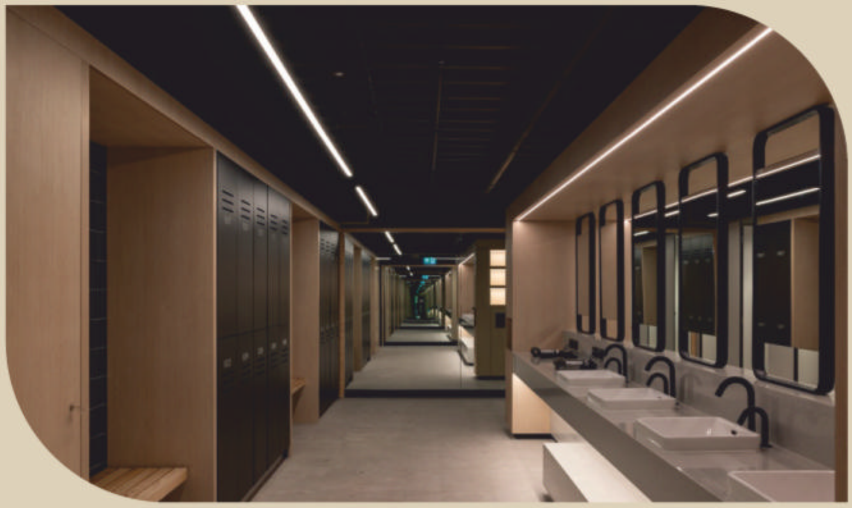
61 Thorndon Quay
Wellington, 6011
+64 4 473 3456
wellington@ecc.co.nz

Christchurch Professional
143a Victoria Street
Christchurch, 8013
+64 3 353 0586
christchurch@ecc.co.nz

JW Marriott
Auckland
Photography by Jono Parker



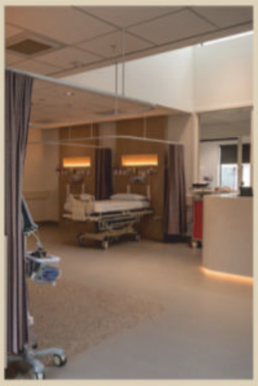
80 Queen Street End of Trip Facilities

design —
Peddlethorp
peddlethorp.co.nz

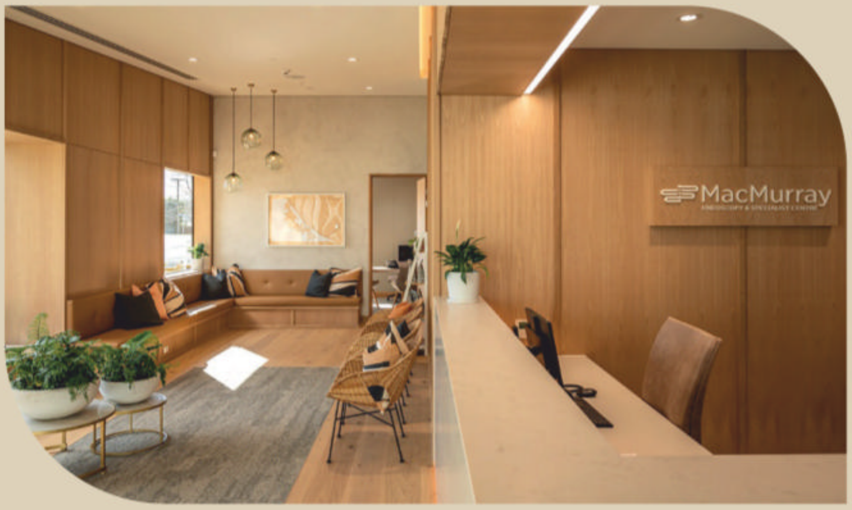
client —
BNZ

design team —
Tessa Pawson,
Brad Luke, Vicky Lam,
Lyndsay Macauley,
Neve Bilani

photography —
Mark Scowen



MacMurray Medical Centre Tauranga



design —
Wingates
wingatearchitects.com

client —
MacMurray Centre
macmurray.co.nz

design team —
David Wingate, Michelle
Teutenberg, Michael Carter,
Victor Chen, Shane Forward

photography —
JK Photography

bigriverpanels.co.nz

photography by Sam Hartnett

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Emerging Design Professional

Michelle Lamb

designer —
Michelle Lamb

current design studio —
Michelle Lamb
Interiorsmichellelamb.co.nz

project involvement —
TW Residence, PN Residence,
KB Residence, MR Residence,
RS Residence, SR Residence,
HB Residence

photography —
Jared Yeoward, Anna McLeod,
Hazel Redmond

designer —
Karla Devine

current design studio —
House Party Interiors
housepartyinteriors.com

project involvement —
Bright Bathroom,
Khandallah Living,
Seatoun Laundry,
Waterfall Island

photography —
Adrian Vercoe,
Bonny Beattie

Karla Devine

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Finalist —
Civic

Punangairi Visitor Centre

design —
Sheppard & Rout Architects
sheprout.com

client —
Department of Conservation
doc.govt.nz

design team —
Jasper van der Lingen,
Steven Orr, Mel North,
Thomas Strange,
Max Warren

photography —
Jason Mann

Finalist —
Community Impact

Callaghan Ward, Mercy Hospital

design —
McCoy Wixon Architects
mccoywixon.co.nz

client —
Mercy Hospital, Dunedin
mercyhospital.org.nz

design team —
Regan Hall,
Andrew French,
James McInnes

photography —
Graham Warman

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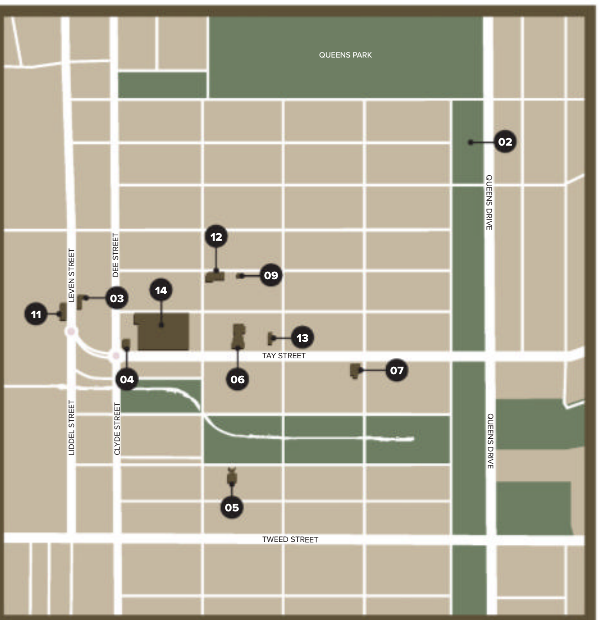


NOT ON MAP 01 08 10

Words by Andrew Barrie
and Yash Bhatia

City Guide: Waihōpai Invercargill

Our southernmost and westernmost city, Invercargill sits on a river bank at the centre of the fertile Southland Plains. The city's original coat of arms tells us all we need to know about what underwrote its prosperity; it features a plough, a sheaf of corn, a bale of wool and a ship to carry those goods overseas.

The region was a site of early interaction between Māori and Europeans – notably, whalers and missionaries. Early development in the area centred on the port at Bluff but Invercargill saw a growth spurt following the discovery of gold to the north in Central Otago in the 1860s. A boom in agricultural exports in the 1880s encouraged the growth of farming in the region. The resulting flow of wealth allowed architects, notably Frederick Burwell, to fill the city's commercial core completely with fine two- and three-storey buildings in various Classical Revival styles. The result was a streetscape with a continuity and coherence that radiates from photos of the era and which can now be experienced by Kiwis only in truncated form in Ōamaru.

The city's continued confidence was evident even as the 20th century saw newer historicist styles grafted into the Italianate street frontages – the romantic Queen Anne-style Alexandra Buildings (c. 1901) by Burwell's pupil Cuthbert Brodrick, Edmund Wilson's Edwardian baroque Town Hall and Theatre (1906), and the monumental, American-influenced First Presbyterian Church by local-born but US-trained John Mair. Mair left Invercargill but continued to play a key role following his appointment as Government Architect in 1923 – his Law Courts (1938) and Post Office (1941) leavening the streetscape with art deco and straight-laced moderne insertions. A new generation of local designers, led by Allan Ford and Edward Smith, emerged in the inter-war period, further stripping back the decoration.

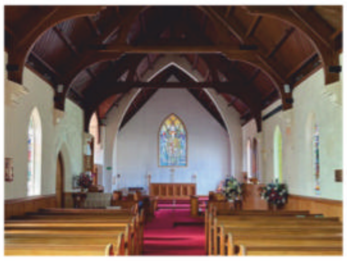
Following visits in the mid-1960s, the Rolling Stones famously declared Invercargill "the arsehole of the world" but the post-war period was a great time for architecture in the city. As with other provincial centres, Invercargill benefited from the wool boom sparked by the Korean War in the early 1950s. The architectural legacy of that time is an abundance of modernist gems – particularly churches and community facilities – by firms such as Ford, Gray, Derbie and Hurd, Smith, Rice, Lawrence and Mollison, McArthur and Boag, Barham and Barham, Lew Simpson, and Arthur Milne.

As in Dunedin, the local scene is characterised by long-standing lineages that survive to the present day, several of the city's current firms having roots extending back to the modernist heyday. Agriculture continues to power the region – the dairy factory at Edendale, a short drive from Invercargill, is New Zealand's longest-running plant and one of the world's largest – and the Zero Fees Scheme at the Southern Institute of Technology has helped keep the city centre lively. There is a sprinkling of projects by big-city firms but the locals still dominate. The streetscape is now a patchwork of architectural styles spanning back to the 1860s but its architects have, for the most part, continued to obey the cardinal rule of urban design: build to the lot line. There are fears that the huge Invercargill Central development might draw life off the street but the city has a long history of arcade shopping. The city centre is compact but remarkably intact and conjures a surprisingly urbane vibe.

While other provincial centres, such as Whanganui, have a rich presence in our architectural history, Invercargill is notable by its absence. Peter Shaw's history of New Zealand architecture includes just four of its buildings. Why? Perhaps because, unlike those of nearby Dunedin, Southland-based architects rarely worked elsewhere. The city presents a smorgasbord of great buildings; for almost all, both they and their designers are largely unknown beyond the city. Invercargill reminds us that there are still treasures to be unearthed in our architectural history.

01

1878
All Saints Anglican Church
507 Dee Street
Frederick Burwell



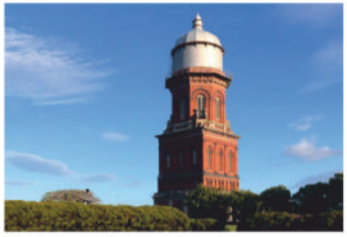
Invercargill was founded in 1856 and its first churches were built in timber. In the 1870s, a second wave of church building saw churches constructed in more substantial materials; All Saints was one of the first in the city to be completed. Its designer, Scottish-born Frederick Burwell, who had lived for some years in Queenstown (see *Architecture NZ* July/Aug 2021), made significant contributions in Invercargill before moving on to work in various Australian cities, including Freemantle. The wooden Parish Hall was completed in 1905 by Burwell's apprentice, Cuthbert Brodrick (see listing 4). Check out Burwell's former Bank of New Zealand (1879) on 'Bank Corner' at 1 Tay Street.

02

1889

Water Tower

101 Doon Street
William Sharp, Borough Engineer



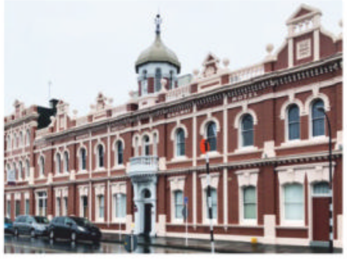
An impressive civic device from the Victorian period, the Tower was the very flat city's primary source of pressurised water supply and, today, still serves as a backup. It was designed by William Sharp, a former Public Works Department engineer. Restoration projects in the late '80s and again in recent years have respectively restored the façade and improved earthquake resilience. Those interested in displays of brick craftsmanship should also check out the adjacent Water Works Control Building, and the neighbouring scalloped concrete water reservoirs feel like a little bit of Palm Springs modernism. Together, they form a dramatic precinct, showcasing the unity of beauty and utility.

03

1896

Victoria Railway Hotel

1–3 Leven Street
McKenzie and Gilbertson



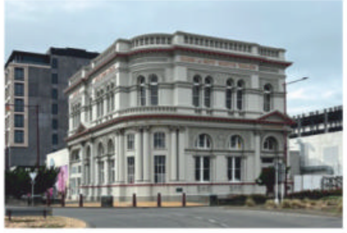
The railway line from Invercargill (see listing 11) was one of the nation's earliest – so much so that its first rails were wooden. Most centres soon had hotels handy to their stations, and this one was designed by local firm McKenzie and Gilbertson in the Edwardian Free Style; it borrows elements from the Italianate, Queen Anne and Baroque Revival styles. Extended, trimmed and altered over the years, the building has housed a hotel business for nearly a century but is currently closed and facing competition. The Menzies Building (1966) next door, a government departmental building designed by the Ministry of Works, is receiving a radical makeover as a new hotel.

04

1904

Bank of New South Wales

Corner Dee and Tay Streets
Cuthbert Brodrick



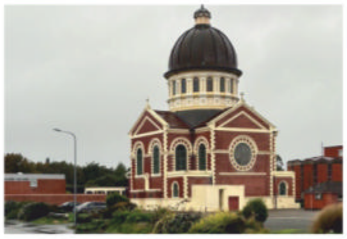
Erected on the site of Invercargill's very first business premises, this building is a key element of Invercargill's historic 'Bank Corner'. The original bank on the site was designed in 1875 by William Clayton (who served as New Zealand's first Colonial Architect) but severely damaged by fire a few years later. The ornateness of Brodrick's classical decoration attests to the prosperity generated by the region's growing agricultural productivity at the start of the century. Brodrick's interior has been modified but the façade remains relatively unchanged. Brodrick fans might check out the Public Trust Building (1921) at 28 Don Street, produced during his partnership with Thomas Royds.

05

1905

St Mary's Basilica

79 Tyne Street
Francis Petre



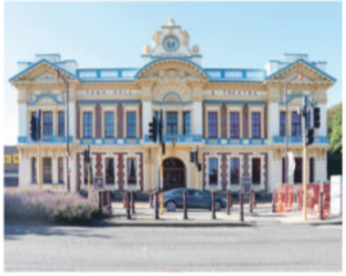
One of New Zealand's great ecclesiological architects, Francis Petre is best known for his Catholic cathedrals in Dunedin, Wellington and Christchurch, the latter being demolished after the earthquakes. A key element on the Invercargill skyline, the taller-than-wide structure is a condensed Greek Cross, topped by a copper-sheathed dome. The 37m-high interior was dealt with in a playful but precise manner, with cream-coloured arched windows, quoins and cornices, and a beautiful stained-glass angel. The modernist neighbours are beauts: McArthur & Boag's Catholic Presbytery (1964) to the west, and Smith, Rice, Lawrence and Mollison's now disused St Catherine's Convent (c. 1966) to the east.

06

1906

Town Hall and Civic Theatre

88 Tay Street
Edmund Wilson



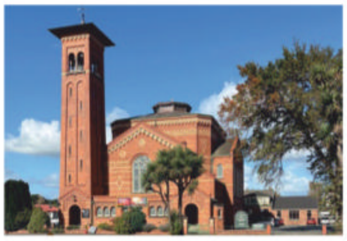
Designed with Edwardian baroque gusto by prominent Southland architect Edmund Wilson, the Town Hall and Theatre combined municipal offices, council chambers and a theatre. The complex was officially reopened in 1930 to mark the proclamation of Invercargill as a city. Refurbishments of the complex in the 1980s and the 2000s have ensured it remains a state-of-the-art performing arts venue. The surrounding area is also worth exploring – take a look at the neighbouring St John's Anglican Church and hall complex, also designed (in part) by Wilson, or take shade under the huge elm, ash, beech and oak trees planted in the 1870s.

07

1915

First Presbyterian Church

155 Tay Street
John Mair



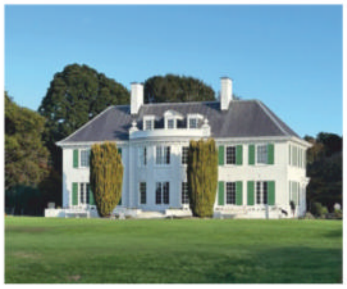
Now a Category 1 historic place, this was Invercargill local John Mair's first building. Training under William Sharp (listing 2) and at the New Zealand Railways under George Troup, he later studied in the US and then spent time working in New York and travelling to London. In his history of New Zealand architecture, Peter Shaw wrote: "Such an eclectic mixture of Italian Romanesque and Byzantine elements might have been fashionable in Boston of Philadelphia… In Invercargill, however, it was considered questionable by a congregation more familiar with Gothic church architecture." Mair would go on to lead the Public Works Department and, eventually, be appointed Government Architect.

08

1924

Anderson Park

91 McIvor Road
Cecil Wood



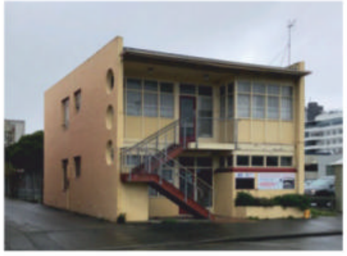
This house and its leafy grounds were developed by Sir Robert Anderson, a local business mogul and, in his later years, philanthropist (Anderson gifted this estate to the city). The elegant neo-Georgian homestead was designed by Cecil Wood, the most prominent Canterbury architect of the period, and now serves as a public art gallery. The grounds are home to Te Wharepuni o Anehana, its carvings produced by Rotorua tohunga whakairo Tene Waitere (Ngāti Tarāwhai). On the drive out, pop by St Stephen's Church Centre (1967) at 284 North Road by local modernists Smith, Rice, Lawrence and Mollison. See *Home & Building* August 1967.

09

1956

Don Street Medical Centre

69 Don Street
Barham and Barham



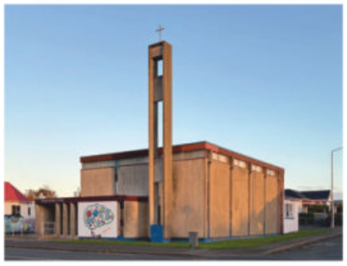
These consulting rooms were designed by Monica Barham, who was the first woman registered architect in the Southland and Otago Branch of the NZIA, and who worked in a prolific partnership with her husband Cecil. Barham's profile has been raised in recent years through the scholarship of Megan Rule, and this project was recently the winner of an NZIA Enduring Architecture Award (see *Architecture NZ* Sept/Oct 2023), now standing as New Zealand's earliest female-designed, award-winning building. See *Architecture NZ* May/June 2024. Barham and Barham employed many of the same modernist motifs in their Methodist Church (1958) at 56 Foyle Street, Bluff.

10

1967

Georgetown Baptist Church

51 Centre Street
Lew Simpson



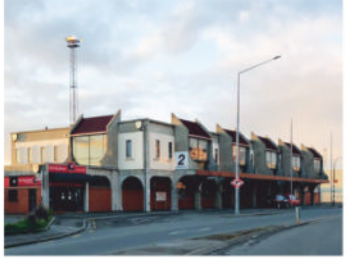
One of New Zealand's under-appreciated architectural gems, this ruthlessly abstract concrete box looks more like a transformer station or telephone exchange than a church. The interior is a disciplined synthesis of light, structure and material – Michael Findlay wrote that "the play of coloured light on the building's interior [is] architecture at its most simple and moving". The church earned Simpson one of two NZIA National Awards he received in 1967 (the other was for a nearby house) and he would go on to make numerous contributions to the city. Stop by his The Cheeky Llama Cafe (1968) in Queens Park, which also survives in near original condition.

11

1978

Invercargill Railway Station

Leven Street
Ford, Gray, Derbie and Hurd



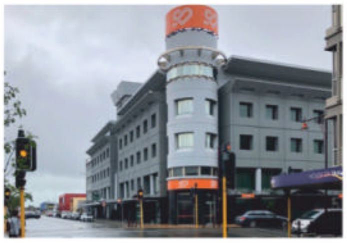
In 1920, following Great War service that included the battle of Passchendaele, Allan Ford began one of the great lineages in Invercargill architecture. He started solo and his firm evolved into Ford, Gray, Derbie and Hurd, then Baxter Hesselin McDowell Architects (listing 12) and, now, Beattie McDowell Architects. Ford was also the father of Monica Barham (see listing 9). Prompted by the 1863 Wakatipu gold rush, the line from Invercargill was just the second steam railway in the nation but passenger trains stopped running to Invercargill in 2002. This building is now looking a bit unloved but it retains its '70s swagger. See *NZIA Journal* April 1975.

12

1993

SBS Bank Head Office

51 Don Street
Barclay Architects and
Baxter Hesselin McDowell Architects



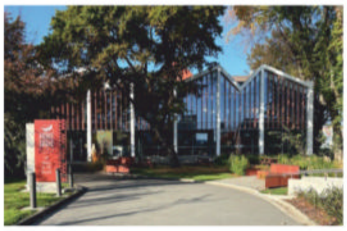
The Southland Building Society traces its origins back to 1869 when it was founded by James Bain, a Southland pioneer who had walked the 200km journey from Dunedin to Invercargill. It has passed through various iterations and is now a full-service bank still headquartered in Invercargill. Understandably, the project sought "to bridge traditional and contemporary symbols". The project might be the world's southernmost example of PoMo whimsy but it deals earnestly with all the urban fundamentals: extra height to emphasise the corner, articulated volumes to mitigate scale, and active frontages at street level. See *Architecture NZ* May/June 1993.

13

2021

Te Rau o Te Huia
SIT Centre for Creative Industries

108 Tay Street
McCulloch Architects



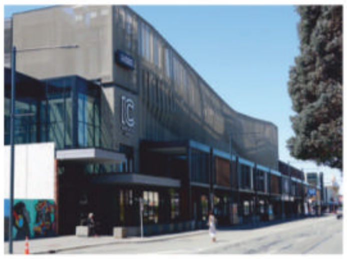
Supporting fees-free study at the Southland Institute of Technology has been a key part of local efforts to revitalise the city, reinforcing the liveliness provided by SIT's campus in the centre of the city. In 2018, SIT acquired the historic St John's Church adjacent to the campus. The church complex had been developed by a succession of key local designers, including McKenzie and Gilbertson, Edmund Wilson (see listing 6) and Smith, Rice, Lawrence and Mollison. Work by McCulloch Architects, another local firm, involved strengthening, upgrades and additions to create an integrated facility for SIT's programmes for animation, art, design, fashion, film and music.

14

2022

Invercargill Central

67 Esk Street
The Buchan Group



Invercargill's central city feels remarkably intact, with mercifully few of the papered-up shop windows or car-park-where-a-building-used-to-be ellipses that mar the downtowns of many of our smaller cities. In fact, things appear to be on the up. This shopping mall involved the redevelopment of almost an entire central city block. The project required the demolition of 43 buildings, many of them historic but including some that were under-occupied and many that were earthquake-prone. Heritage values have been served by the retention of notable historic façades on Esk Street, and the shared space down this frontage feels very urbane.

Sources

The first source to seek out is Michael Findlay's 'The built environment' in Paul Sorrell's *Murihiku: The Southland Story* (Invercargill: Southland to 2006 Book Project Committee, 2006). The best source on practice in the region is architect Norman Ledgerwood's fantastic *Southern Architects: A History of the Southern Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects* (Dunedin: Southern Branch of the NZIA, 2009). Ledgerwood's work aside, Invercargill's footprint in the literature is – like many other out-of-the-way provincial centres – remarkably small. There are just four buildings (St Mary's, Town Hall, First Presbyterian and Anderson Park) in Peter Shaw's *History of New Zealand Architecture* (Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991) and just one (Georgetown Baptist) in Julia Gatley's *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904–1984* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008). When looking further back, useful sources are Frances Porter's *Historic Buildings of New Zealand – South Island* (Auckland: Methuen, 1983) and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust's *Historic Buildings of Otago and Southland* of 1989.

Other addresses

Former Masonic Hall (1864)
32 Kelvin Street
Taylor & Marchant

Alexandra Buildings (c. 1901)
83 Dee Street
Cuthbert Brodrick

David Strang (WEA) Building (1912)
100 Esk Street
Richard Marshall

Former Grand Hotel (1913)
76 Dee Street
Cuthbert Brodrick

Southland Boys' High School (1926)
181 Herbert Street
John Mair,
Government Architect

Former Masonic Hall (1926)
80 Forth Street
Brodrick & Royd

Law Courts (1938)
35 Don Street
John Mair,
Government Architect

St Theresa of Lisieux Church (1956)
40 Perth Street
Ted McCoy

Scottish Hall (1957)
112 Esk Street
Smith and Rice

Kelvin Hotel (1964)
20 Kelvin Street
Arthur Milne

Don Street Redevelopment (2017)
20 Don Street
McCulloch Architects

Invercargill Estuary Walkway Shelters (2017)
Access from Bond Street
Beattie McDowell
Architects

Invercargill Public Library (2019, refurbished)
50 Dee Street
Beattie McDowell
Architects

The Langlands (2022)
59 Dee Street
Warren and Mahoney

Photography: Yash Bhatia and Andrew Barrie.

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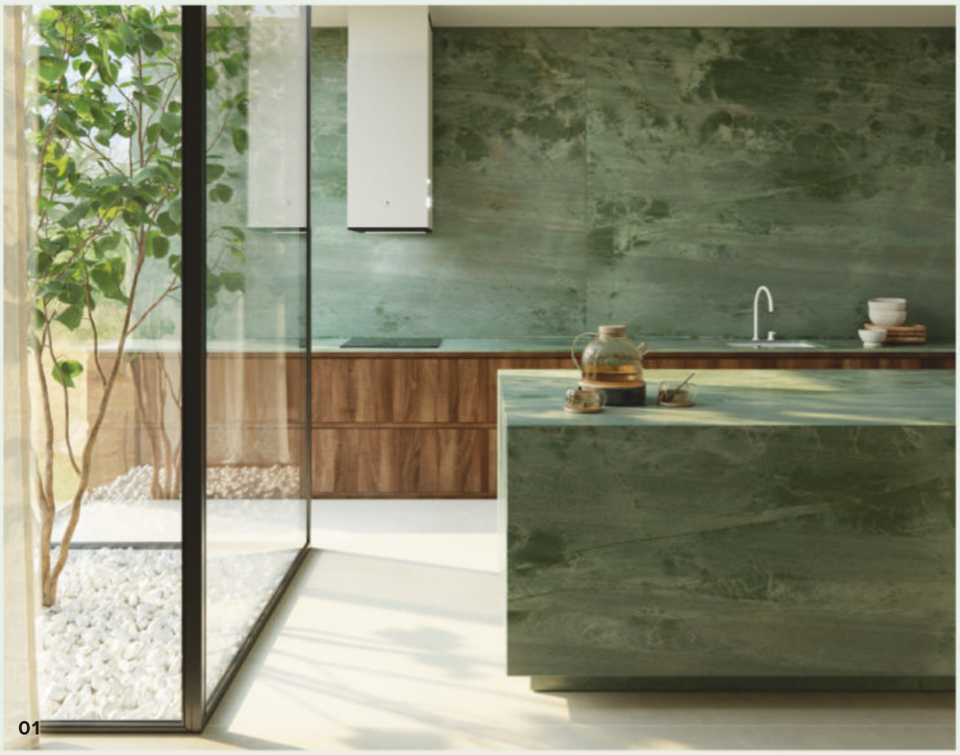
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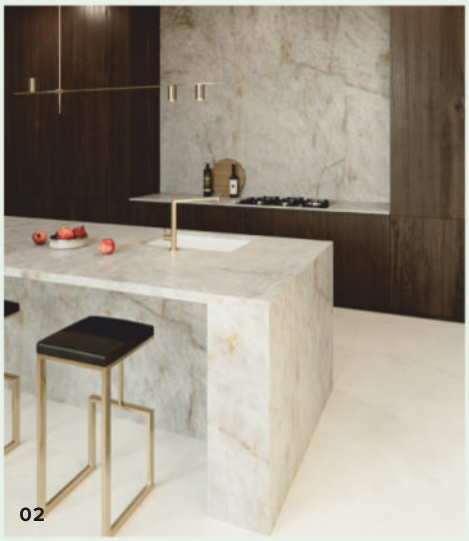
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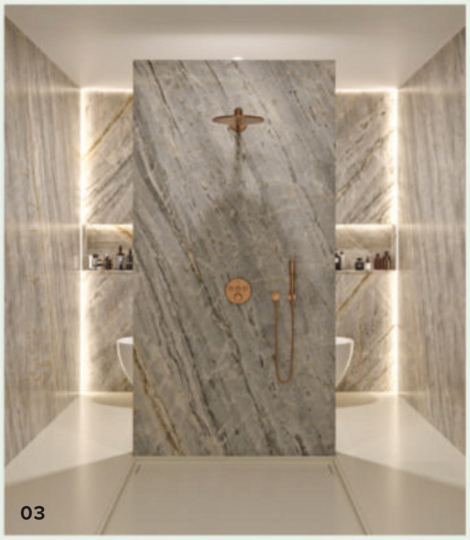
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01 Sensa by Cosentino, new natural stone, Itara.

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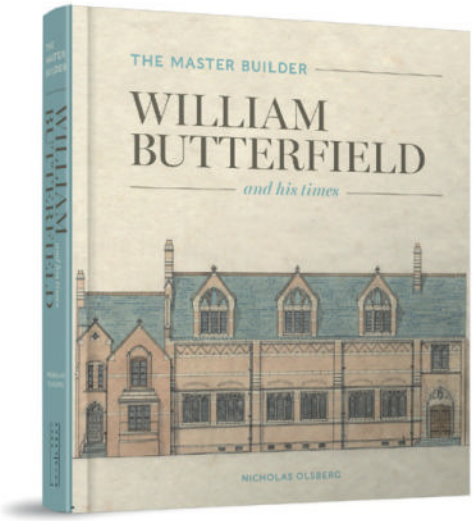


The Master Builder: William Butterfield and his times

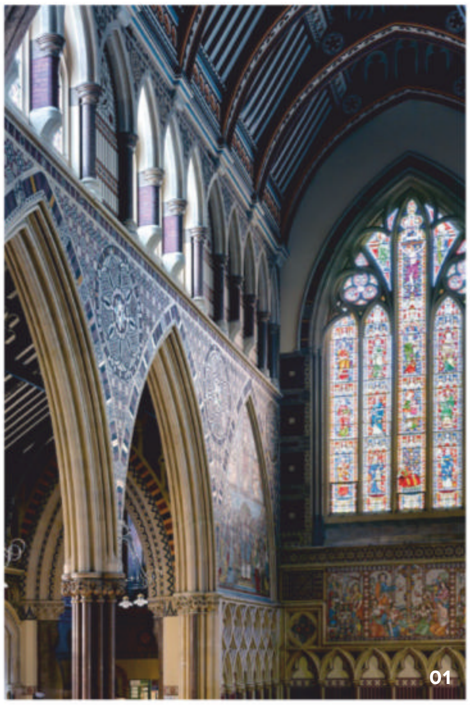
By Nicholas Olsberg
Lund Humphries, 2024

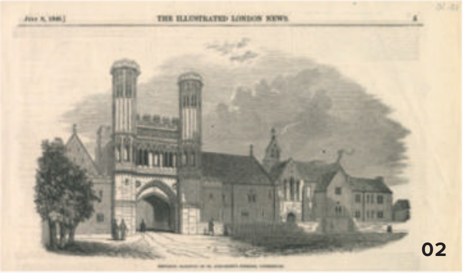
In December 1849, the Canterbury Association, while planning its idealistic settlement in the South Island of New Zealand, asked William Butterfield to design a model school and master's house for use in the new colony. At that date, Butterfield was already established as a prominent Gothic Revival architect, although the projects for which he would later become celebrated, the Ecclesiologists' model city church, All Saints, Margaret Street, London, the chapel and associated school buildings for Rugby, and Keble College, Oxford, were all in the future.

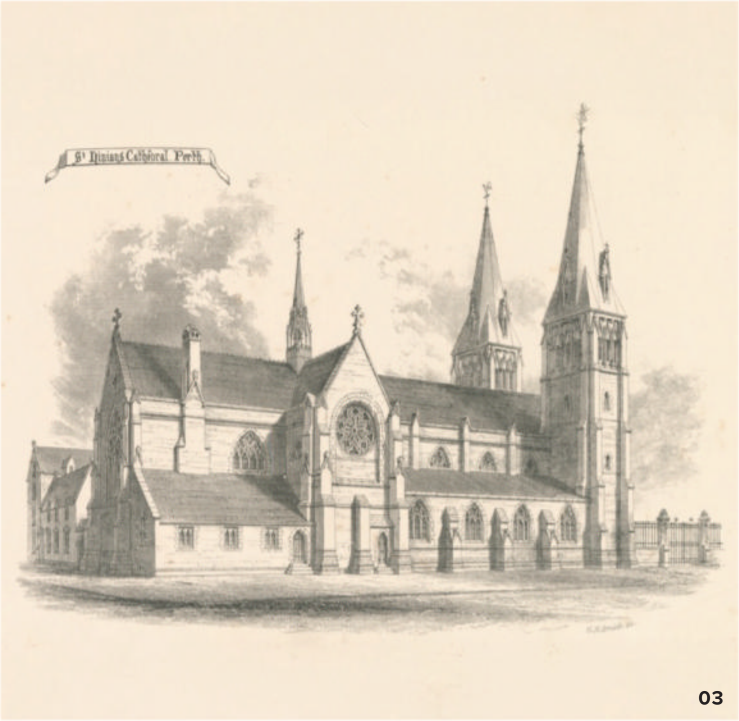
Butterfield's work in the 1840s was focused on rural churches and parochial schools, funded by philanthropic landowners, who wished to address both the spiritual and educational needs of their tenants. These projects included compact, economical school rooms that could also serve as chapels for Sunday worship while providing accommodation for resident teachers. This was just the kind of multi-purpose building that the Canterbury Association anticipated would be needed in its fledgling colony. In reality, Butterfield's design proved too ambitious and it remained unbuilt, although the plan itself survives. The wider context for this design, however, is well mapped out in the opening chapters of Nicholas Olsberg's new study of the architect.

Like many of his contemporaries, Butterfield designed churches for the expanding British Empire, his cathedrals for Melbourne and Adelaide being notable Australasian examples, although neither proved to be happy experiences. Butterfield never visited the Antipodes but his youngest brother, infected by the emigration fever of the 1850s, arrived in Canterbury with the first wave of colonists. He did not remain long but the east window of St Saviour's at Holy Trinity in Lyttelton, the only Butterfield stained-glass window in the country, is probably a legacy of this connection. Also, Butterfield's 1858 design for Auckland's St Matthew-in-the-City remained unbuilt.

Given these local connections, quite aside from the fact that Butterfield is one of the most original Victorian Goths, a new book on the architect is bound to be of interest to New Zealand readers, especially those with a passion for our own Gothic Revival heritage. The book's title reflects Olsberg's focus on the contemporary context of the architect's work, emphasising the religious revival and humanitarianism that formed the background to many commissions.







01 All Saints, Margaret Street, London. Photo: James Morris.

02 St Augustine's College: View of The Great Gateway. *The Illustrated London News*, 8 July 1848.

03 St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth. Perspective first published in *The Ecclesiologist*, 1850, as reproduced in full octavo plate in A. J. B. Hope, 1861, *The English Cathedral in the Nineteenth Century*. UK: John Murray, p. 78.

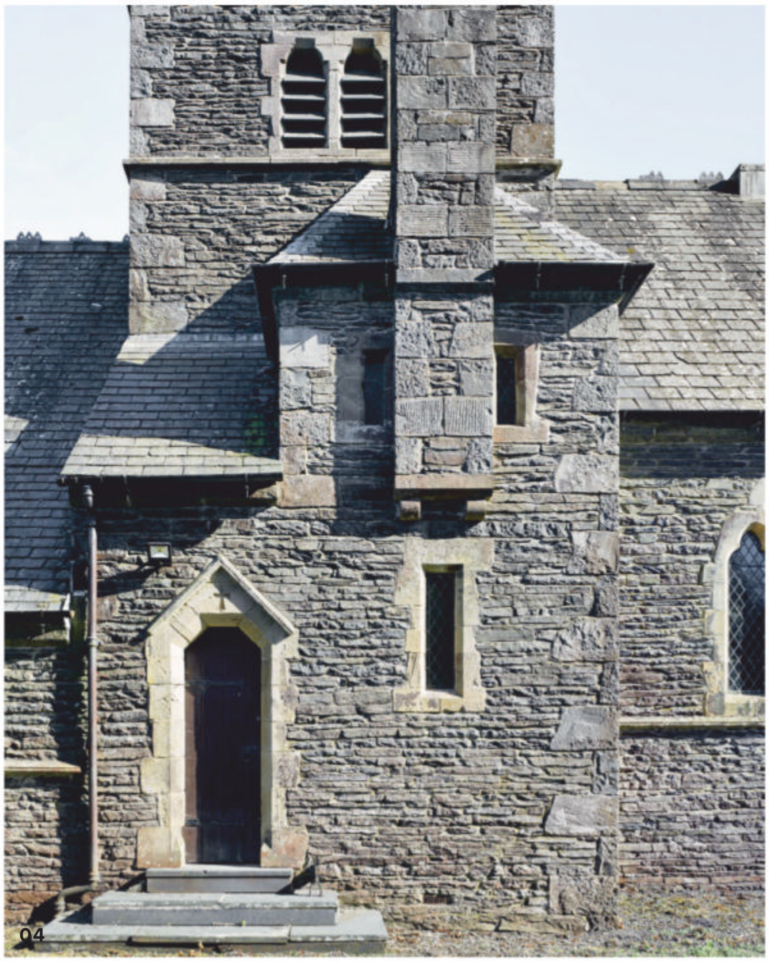
Butterfield's commitment to designing churches that combined sound construction with polychromatic richness can be interpreted as his response to an industrialising society marked by vast disparities of wealth. In the parish church, the one space where rich and poor comingled, all could share in buildings designed to endure and surrender to the colouristic splendour of interiors glowing with imperishable materials: polished stone, encaustic tiles, mosaic and stained glass. Butterfield's glimpse of heaven on earth was available to all.

While the interiors of All Saints, Margaret Street and Keble College Chapel represent Butterfield at his most gaudy, the small Welsh chapel he designed in 1868 at Bont Goch shows his ability to use local materials with a sympathy and care that looks forward to the Arts and Crafts movement's celebration of vernacular building traditions at the century's end. The vestry elevation, with its monochrome palette, sharply defined mouldings and corbelled chimney breaking through the eave of the hipped roof, has a sculptural intensity that reveals that, for Butterfield, no project was too insignificant to be subjected to the full force of his architectural intelligence.

This uncompromising passion is perhaps the defining characteristic of Butterfield's art: a quality with which even his contemporaries sometimes struggled. Later generations found his idiosyncratic genius hard to fathom. In 1928, in his pioneering study of the Gothic Revival, Kenneth Clark detected an almost sadistic quality in Butterfield's works, while John Summerson, in a celebrated essay, wrote of the 'glory of ugliness'. The brutalist aesthetic of the 1950s and '60s generated a more sympathetic environment for the appreciation of Butterfield's muscular buildings and Paul Thompson's 1971 monograph firmly established him at the head of the pantheon of Victorian architects. Nicholas Olsberg grew to admire Butterfield while a pupil at Rugby School in the 1960s and his book reflects a lifelong fascination with the architect. It is richly illustrated with Butterfield's meticulous plans and generous portfolios of contemporary photographs by James Morris. Olsberg has further enriched our understanding of this endlessly fascinating architect, although his book complements rather than supplants Thompson's earlier study. It is safe to say, however, that the last word has yet to be written on William Butterfield.

Ian Lochhead

04



05

04 Vestry door, St Peter's Church, Bont Goch (Elerch), Wales. Photo: James Morris.

05 Chapel of St Anne's Bedehouses, Lincoln, 1854. Photo: James Morris.

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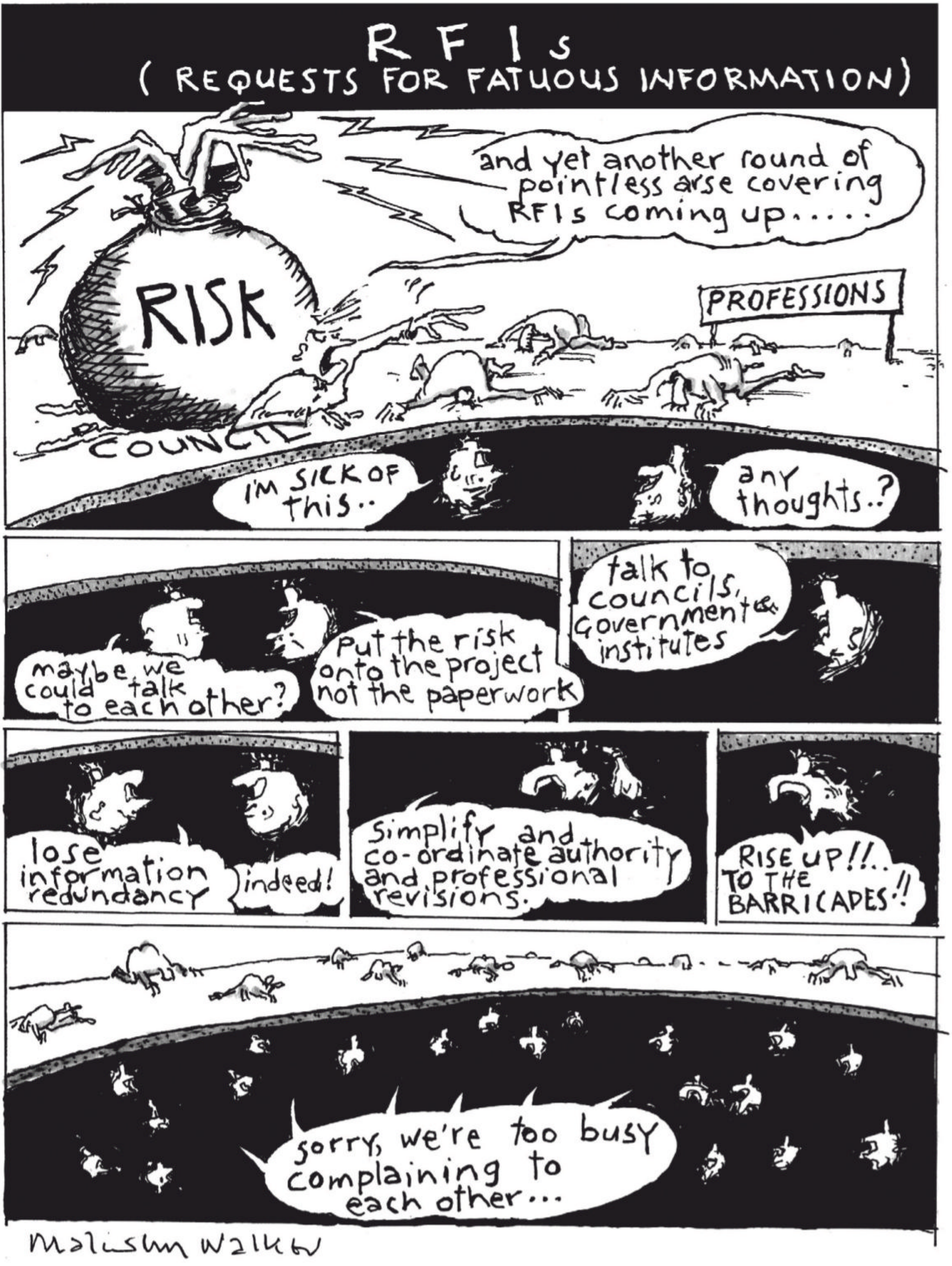
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